University of Alberta

Becoming Unemployed: A Case Study of Experiences of Dislocation Among Members of a Specific Professional Workplace.

by

Paul G. Letkemann

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring, 1998.

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ABSTRACT

This study begins with the premise that most of the literature on experiences of unemployment, use as their main theoretical framework the two dichotomous categories of the (positive) working and (negative) non-working, and associated characteristics of each, which are largely provided as mainstream societal ideological constructs. Using a different approach, this study concentrates on the experiences of a relatively small group of participants, most of whom had been, or still are working in one very specialized professional occupation, and one specific workplace.

In-depth interviewing is used in order to elucidate these highly individualized and personalized experiences, as they directly relate to similarly highly personalized and meaningful specific occupational and workplace contexts. In this way, the unemployed individuals are not centrally viewed as having 'joined' a societal category of the unemployed, and become part of a 'homogenous' societal category. Viewing the unemployed as homogenous may be convenient or appropriate in a statistical or macroscopic sense, but these approaches do not present the personalized meaningfulness of the specific locales from which these people are now dislocated.

This study attempts to integrate the experiences of unemployment with narrations of the meaningfulness of the specific workplace. The workplace is shown as a very distinct type of context, not easily duplicated for the highly specialized professional. The macro-level context involves a small segment of the professional civil servant workforce, whose specialized occupation was almost completely discontinued, due to selective fiscal cutbacks in Alberta under the Klein administration in early 1993.

In order to better understand the meaningfulness of the specific field and workplace, Bourdieu's (1977;1984) concepts of individual agency, habitus and collective habitus are employed, along with some anthropological concepts of ritualization and symbolism. Experiences of unemployment are theoretically framed with concepts like stigma, marginality and liminality. It is concluded that specific meanings and highly personalized workplaces are at least as, if not more important in understanding experiences of the unemployed, than the broader ideological constructs such as the work ethic, consumerism and so forth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I must acknowledge the great debt I owe to all of the people who chose to participate in this project, by being interviewed at a very traumatic period in their lives, and by giving me additional contextual information, on many occasions, which helped in my understanding of the structures and positions in their severely downsized office. As well, I greatly appreciated the honesty of these participants, and the richness of the information that they provided, especially since much of this was of a highly personally meaningful nature.

My doctoral supervisor, Dr. Jean DeBernardi, is thanked for her positive qualities, both academic and personal, which are too numerous to mention here. Jean was helpful at every stage of this project, always very honest, and provided incredibly detailed and consistently astute academic and writing advice. This required a considerable amount of time and effort, and Jean was amazingly responsive in her responses to reading, editing and proofing of multiple thesis drafts. Thanks Jean!

Throughout my graduate studies, my roommate and best friend, Ms. Marian Matkowski, provided an extremely high level of emotional support, along with putting up with the usually 'traumas' of graduate studies, which usually means that the person you are living with is more traumatised than the student. Marian often took on additional household duties when I was working at a 'deadline pace', and was always empathetic when my perceived pressures would be manifested in rather moody behaviour. Thank you very much Marian!

Similarly, gratitude goes out to my parents, Peter and Katy, who also remained empathetic to my perceived 'struggle', gave me considerable good advice and sympathy, and helped me financially and emotionally during my graduate studies, and during my life in general. I am indeed very fortunate to have such exceptional people as parents.

I must also express sincere thanks to my good friends, Darlene Bagstad, Marlys Rudiak, Gail Mathew and Kelly Nicholson-Scheer, all of whom gave me support and encouragement. Being able to have lunches and discuss problems with these people helped keep me grounded, and allowed me to persevere. Darlene in particular, thank you very much for a close friendship, many 'consultation sessions' in your unpaid yet fully qualified capacity as psychologist for many graduate students.

I also express more gratitude than is possible to write here, to three very exceptional professors at the University of Lethbridge, Dr. Norman Buchignani, Dr. Doreen Indra and Dr. Pat Chuchryk. Without the ongoing support and advice of these astute and empathetic people, I doubt whether I would have finished undergraduate, let alone graduate studies. Thanks Norm, for taking many chances and supporting the continuous reassembling of an 'abortive' rocketship. This must have taken an extensive knowledge of physics and a lot of resources, time and care.

Finally, I thank the members of my committee; Dr. Linda Fedigan, Dr. David Bai, Dr. Greg Forth, Dr. Ian Urquhart, and Dr. Patrick Burman, my extremely knowledgeable and thorough external reader. Thank you (and other Professors at the University of Alberta) very much for all of your invaluable contributions to my doctoral studies experience and learning. Thanks for the further support, to my new friends Sam and Judy, two Professors in Lethbridge whose advice and support kept me going.

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INTRODUCTION:

THE NEED FOR INTEGRATION OF CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES IN EXAMINING EXPERIENCES OF WORK AND UNEMPLOYMENT

[1] Main Hypothesis

In a general sense, this study is intended to examine some of the experiential meanings of work and unemployment among a group of middle class professional individuals. A main concern is the nature of relationships between the individual agent and dominant societal values and ideology with regard to work and unemployment. Some research on the experience of unemployment has focussed on how unemployed individuals 'manoeuvre' in order to avoid stigma and marginality and maintain what is essentially an acceptable structural position. The 'acceptability' of these positions is presented in these studies as relating to individual interpretations of cultural or societal ideologies, in a rather deterministic sense (e.g. Wadel 1973; Howe 1990). Other mainstream studies, such as Burman (1988) and Newman (1989), provide broader perspectives, which are very illuminating, but also assume the central influential properties of dominant cultural and societal values, with a particular emphasis on dichotomous societal categories of the worker as opposed to the unemployed. In contrast, some studies of workplace organization and interaction, usually in article rather than book-length format, concentrate on the centrality of (usually a few) specific work-related values, as variables in examining the workplace experience. However, these more specific workplace characteristics are rarely applied as central to the experience of unemployment. In this study, I attempt to combine these two theoretical and contextual approaches, since *both* are needed in order to accommodate the experiences of my participants.

My hypothesis is that individuals, both working and unemployed, are active agents involved in a highly personalised process of meaning-creation, which is socially reinforced and objectively realized mainly in quite small social units. I take the position that these are far more relevant and less abstract than dominant societal or cultural categorisations.

Specific symbolic meaning creation is assumed to be directly related to individual experiences of unemployment or dislocation. This would mean that the experience of unemployment may be more meaningfully related to specific individual developmental processes, in specific workplace settings, then to the more highly abstract relationship of individual self-perceptions to any assumed influences of dominant societal ideologies. These macroscopic ideologies are seen as background context, within which much more meaningful personal contexts exist. Personalised contexts are constructed through diachronic relationships with individual values, goals, and interests, and in this way integrated with self-perceptions.

Related to this main hypothesis, it follows that the degree to which unemployed individuals do or do not experience a liminal state, would also be determined by the degree to which they integrated their self-perceptions with characteristics of the social and occupational dynamics of the specific workplace context. Liminality upon unemployment has been examined in several extensive studies, for example Burman (1988) and Newman (1989); but again, it is related in these to dislocation from structural positioning at the level of societal categorisations of the working and unemployed. In this study, liminality is also seen as being related to these broad societal categorisations, as well as to dislocation from specific, microcosmic workplace contexts, characterised by a high degree of self-identification, with very specific occupational and social integration found within the specific workplace context.

In order to examine the experience of unemployment in a more specific way than has been shown in most of the research to date, I have chosen a small research population, among which I conducted extensive interviewing. I have also chosen to interview the people who survived the cutbacks and remain practising in this workplace. It follows that if my hypothesis is valid, these 'survivors' should also have altered perceptions of their relationship to the workplace, since I am taking the position that it is not the societal working/non-working distinction that is most salient, but the highly orchestrated and personalised collective workplace context.

The unemployed individuals have been dislocated from a specific occupationally-related workplace, due to radical socioeconomic restructuring in Alberta, which allows for an emphasis on both the specific as well as the societal contexts. I chose to emphasize the occupational area of land-use planning, as practised in a specific Regional Planning Commission. When provincial subsidization for this public service was cut 100%, the consequent staff reductions drastically altered office structure and social dynamics. This was more than 'downsizing'; it represented the almost complete elimination of an entire occupational field in Alberta, and caused the 'redundancy' of many specialized middle-class professional positions. Most, but not all of my participants were either persons dislocated from this office, or survivors still working there in a very altered capacity.

[2] An Outline of the Definition of 'Middle-Class' Used in this Study

I chose to interview members of the professional middle-class in part because it would be expected that these people would be very aware of the broad social value distinction between the working and non-working categories, as well as the context of the specific occupation and workplace. In this study, these general ideological, and specific occupational understandings are the most relevant aspects of my usage of the term 'middle-class' as a category. This term has been used in so many different ways in previous studies, that it does not seem appropriate here to assign an individual or household income level as a standard 'measure' of whom is or is not a 'middle-class' person. As my participants' contextual understandings as to their sense of belonging to the middle-class is central here, this is the main criterion employed in my use of the term, Much of this understanding by my participants involved personal conditions rather than household incomes: two central considerations which 'placed' these people in the category of the middle-class professional were: 1) they all contributed specific occupational knowledge towards the productive functioning of what is commonly termed a 'white-collar' rather than 'blue-collar' workplace, which gave them both a sense of professionalism, as well as a feeling of belonging to the category of the middle class. 2) All of my participants indicated that they had been raised in middle-class households, with what they usually referred to as middle-class expectations and aspirations. With these two central considerations in mind when I use the term middle-class, I should also provide some information about the wage levels among my participants. Although any direct correlation between household incomes and the middle-class remains vague and somewhat idiosyncratic in the literature, it is still important in further clarification of the use of the term middle-class in the following pages.

Within the Planning Commission itself, the participants that I interviewed were all, except one person, receiving (at the time of their layoffs, or as survivors still working) the highest level of pay for their respective positions. This is because each one of them had occupied their positions long enough to have had their salaries increased to the maximum amounts, which I will list here. [Please note that each position listed, including the part-time ones, included a *very* comprehensive benefits package as well]

1) The Director of a Land Use Planning Commission would receive a salary of about $65,000/yr. They would usually have a masters degree in planning and some management experience as a senior planner.
2) A senior planner would make about $60,000/yr. They would usually have a masters degree in planning and experience as a planner.
3) A planner would have a salary in the neighbourhood of $50,000, with a bachelors degree in land use planning or geography, and usually some experience as an assistant planner.
4) A planning assistant would earn about $40,000/yr, usually hold a bachelors degree in land-use planning or geography, or have very extensive workplace experience.
5) A subdivision officer or bookkeeper would earn about $36,000, and hold secretarial diplomas, workplace experience and usually would have taken further upgrading courses.
6) A full-time secretary in this workplace would earn about $32,000/yr, with a secretarial diploma, extensive workplace experience, and often relevant upgrading courses.
7) A part-time secretary in this workplace would usually be in a job-sharing position, and make approximately half of a full secretarial position, or $16,000/yr, this amount would vary depending upon workload demand, and hours spent on the job.
8) All other positions described by my participants as being 'lateral' positions related to one of the above, would receive about the same salary as these positions.

With reference to my usage of the term 'middle-class' as a category, the reader will have noted that a wide range of salaries has been incorporated in my definition. It should be noted that every one of the part-time positions were held by members of dual-earning households. Their part-time incomes were stated by them to comprise between ¼ and 1/3 of the household income, so that the lowest-earning household represented by a participant in my study would represent earnings of about $35,000 - $40,000/yr along with very substantial benefits. The lowest single-income participant also had an income in this range. Of the higher – income dual earning households representing the 'top-end' of my middle-class categorization, the exact figure is not known to me, but would be very close to the area of $120,000/yr. Financially, then, I include in my definition of 'middle-class' a household range of incomes from about $37,000 - $120,000 , which likely could be more accurately seen as representing 'lower,' 'middle,' and 'upper-middle' middle-class ranges, although other factors, such as the number of dependants of course affect this determination. The people I interviewed who had worked in positions outside of this specific workplace would also fall into the household salary range described above. My participants, as I've mentioned, viewed themselves as belonging in one of these middle-class categories, so, as an inherently emic one, the definition remains valid for the purposes of this study.

[3] 'Habitus' and 'Class Habitus'

In this study, I use Bourdieu's (1977,1984) concept of the individual and collective habituses as they apply to this particular workplace. Given the rather large diversity in household incomes and salaries of the various occupational positions included in my usage of the term middle-class, it is also necessary at this point to provide a brief outline of my usage of the term 'habitus' here, particularly in the collective sense encompassing the entire workplace. The usage of this term, and other of Bourdieu's conceptual frameworks is more comprehensively addressed in chapters four and five below. For now it should be briefly mentioned that the individual habitus refers to a very specific, and highly class-specific combination of individualistic characteristics and traits, acquired and refined through a lifetime of individual development, choices, pursuits, educational and personal growth and so forth. By my inclusion, then, of such a diverse group of people, from secretaries to directors, males and females, and so forth, I am undoubtedly stretching the concept of the collective habitus rather thin, and not fully acknowledging the individuality and highly specific meaningfulness of the concept as intended by Bourdieu (1984).

The reasons that I justify this inclusion of what would be appropriately referred to as many different and very distinct class habituses, within one collective habitus of the specific workplace, are much the same as the reasons that I include such a diversity of income-related lifestyles in my usage of the middle-class as a category, as I've outlined above. Of course, the individual, educational and personal developments represented by my participants include a very wide range of lifestyles, characteristics, choices, and many conditions associated with class distinctions, such as educational levels and salaries. However, in this study, it is the dynamics of the interactions of these individual habituses which come together to form a collectivity, or collective habitus in this specific workplace, highly revolving around a specific occupational field. Due to this emphasis, in this study it became obvious to myself that it was necessary to use a very broad, inclusive interpretation of the specific concept of the habitus. This is because within this workplace, even given the great differences in education, positions and salaries, there was a very strong sense of everyone, including the support staff, as being integral parts of the purpose of this occupation, and the ability to objectify this purpose through integrated workplace practice. In a sense, then, class habitus differences became muted in the intensity of everyday practice, and the reliance of individuals on the collectivity; in a very real sense then, individuality, while simultaneously finding expression in the workplace, also became somewhat subsumed by collective occupational practice. This will be examined further in chapters four and five below. For now, one example will serve to illustrate why I found it necessary to include such a diverse population in the same collective habitus. It was mentioned to me several times by planners and even the Director, that the secretaries had learned so much of the intricate planning and bylaw-related procedural methodology, that frequently they would make significant alterations to project submissions of the planners, in effect, correcting important mistakes before the final product left the workplace. In these kinds of ways, the support staff, in my view, should be included within the same workplace collective habitus as the more highly educated and salaried professionals, and also need to be considered as highly specialized professionals in the same occupational area. This does not in any way deny the inherent differences in available lifestyle choices related to income, individuality related to lifetimes of various kinds of development and training, or in effect, what is referred to as different class habituses (Bourdieu 1984). Instead, my study shows that class habituses may be more salient *outside* of the specific workplace, *if* intensely collective occupational practice acts to subsume, obscure, or 'mute' these class habitus differences within the workplace itself. This could never be a 'complete' or 'absolute' negation of the relevance of class habitus differences, in much the same way that gender differences cannot be negated or completely subsumed, which is primarily discussed in chapter six below.

[4] Anonymity Versus Biographical Detail

All of my interviews were taped, and participants given unlimited time to adequately express their own interpretations of what was experientially important to them. Many interviews lasted more than two hours, and provided extensive data. These interpretations formed the basis for my study, in an inductive sense, although previous research provided a framework for guiding the initial series of interviews.

It would have been convenient, and more contextually informative, to provide the reader with detailed information about the specific occupations and duration of time spent working in this office, along with each quote from a participant. However, in the interests of protecting the identities of participants, this information is presented here in a vague way, and in many cases some biographical information, such as years of practice, have been intentionally altered. There were more than ten Regional Planning Commission offices throughout Alberta, all affected in a similar manner by the cutbacks, and the names of towns and cities have also been altered. The only other biographical information, aside from the salary ranges, which I am prepared to provide here, is the age ranges of my participants, which would be approximately from 34 to 60 years of age. Within the interview material, a capital 'R' denotes my narration as researcher, while a 'P' indicates narration by the participant.

[5] Overview of Chapter Contents

In chapter one I provide an outline of the contextual setting in Alberta at the time of my research. I give an overview of the massive budget reductions put in place by the Klein administration in Alberta, and review some of the human costs. I also provide a contextual perspective on the specific occupational area of regional land-use planning in Alberta, and a brief description of how the budget cuts affected this occupational area in such a particularly disastrous way.

In chapter two I outline the main theoretical concepts and perspectives used in this study. These are central theoretical frameworks related to work and in particular to the unemployed. I also explain the main theoretical and conceptual approaches used in this study. Some of these have been widely applied in previous studies of work and unemployment, while others have not been extensively utilised.

In chapter three I describe methodological considerations in this study in some detail.. Theoretical and epistemological issues are taken into account, followed by an outline of specific methods and procedures.

In chapter four, following inductive reflection on the narrations of my participants, I emphasize the importance of post-secondary educational development, which is related to individual interests, and designed towards objectification in the occupationally specific workplace. This chapter introduces the importance of process and practice in the specific field as theoretically contextualized by Pierre Bourdieu.

In chapter five I continue with the context of the specific workplace. Here I emphasize the development of intense and meaningful social interaction and occupational practice. Personalization of field-related positions is also emphasized, and applied in terms of individual, collective and field-related self-development.

In chapter six, I concentrate on some of the more salient aspects of gender in the workplace setting. The nature of gender-segregation in the general labour force and institutions is briefly looked at, along with the dialectic between the workplace practice and household and familial labour. Since my research population was not large, only the gender-relevant aspects of workplace position and discourse mentioned as particularly significant by participants is used here. My participants were evenly divided between males and females, an intentional choice that allows for a more balanced perspective in this study.

In chapter seven, I apply my interview data in a broader contextual level, integrating individual perspectives with the influences of dominant ideologies about work and unemployment. The conceptual societal division between the working and jobless is examined, along with associated moralistic valuing of work in western society. Consumerism as a work-related, morally-charged and ritualized imperative in western society is also outlined.

In chapter eight I look at several aspects of the stigmatization and marginalization of the unemployed, illustrated with narrations of my participants, and related to dominant social values. In chapter nine I continue this theme, further integrating marginalization of the unemployed with feelings of stigmatization, since these appear to be very closely linked. I contend that the mass media presents a generally distorted contextual perspective, and contributes to the moralistic conceptual division of society into categories of the employed and unemployed. The phenomenon of a general discouragement and lowered occupational and lifestyle expectations among the middle-class are also outlined in this chapter.

In the last chapter I begin by examining the concept of liminality in relation to experiences of the unemployed. I emphasize liminality in the context of dislocation from specifically meaningful structured processes in workplace practice. I also relate liminal experiences to dislocation from broader societal categorizations and characterizations. The liminal experience is shown to be experienced in relation to both of these contextual 'levels' of dislocation, and cannot be comprehensively applied using only one or the other context.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE CONTEXTUAL SETTING AND SPECIFIC SITUATION

In this chapter I begin by briefly outlining some more general contextual situations of the western middle-class. I also review the more specific situation in Alberta, which directly affected the people interviewed for this study. This context includes a brief outline of the role of the media, because of its relevancy to the perceptions of the persons interviewed. Both the general and specific situational observations provide a framework for the emphasis on the particular field of land-use planning in Alberta.

There are three related central themes in this chapter. First, I provide a contextualized rationale for concentrating on the middle-class professional. Second, I briefly describe the situation regarding severe budget cutbacks in Alberta by the Klein administration, which led to job loss among the individuals I interviewed. Thirdly I describe the occupational dimensions of land-use planning, including the importance of the particular workplace environment, thereby providing a comprehensive setting for the focus of the study.

[1] Radical Socioeconomic Change and Western Middle-Class 'Invisibility'

The Western economy is undergoing a period of flux relating to global economic circumstance.[1] As Juravich (1990:81) notes, as socioeconomic changes occur in recent times, work has become less romanticized, and less popular as a subject for the contemporary popular culture literature. As middle-class jobs disappear, so do the middle class workers from the literature, in much the same way as Juravich notes in relation to 'blue-collar' workers.

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[1] What is commonly referred to as the general 'decline' of the Western middle-class is an important macroscopic contextual background for a study of this kind. However, as a case study of a particular occupational category, specific workplace and situation in Alberta, this macroscopic socioeconomic material is not presented here, except as it pertains directly to interview material in following chapters. As this macroscopic theory and data has been carefully researched prior to my beginning the interview process, some key works utilized should be mentioned here. In discussing general reasons for the 'decline of the Western middle-class,' Haynes and Jacobs

> ... our economy has changed drastically in the past two decades, with an increasing concentration of capital by multinational corporations, rising imports and new areas of employment. Millions of American workers are employed in relatively low paid jobs with little chance of advancement in the service sector, and millions of Americans continue to work in basic industry not unlike a generation ago. Yet they are very much ignored in popular culture which focuses on executive work, computers and high technology, when it focuses on work at all. The workers and unions which became normalized in the post-war era, have in a sense become trivialized as we approach the 1990s. Workers, manual work and unions are seen only in their relationship to the past and are clearly not part of the fast track in the pursuit of excellence.
>
> (Juravich 1990:81)

Related by geography, close economic ties and numerous trade agreements, Canadians are experiencing similar macroscopic socio-economic changes as Americans. In Alberta, following massive budget cuts, provincial public service professionals who are suddenly jobless seem to 'disappear' from media attention, soon after the job losses are announced. This, according to most recent research, has to do with predominant social values,[2] the "American dream" and the "work ethic," as Newman notes.

(1994); Strobel (1993); Kutsche (1989) and Ritzer (1989) were particularly informative.

[2] For a comprehensive post-Marxist account of capitalism, consumerism and the role of the media in Canada, see Smythe (1981). Smythe provides an interesting definition of the mass-mediated audience as commodity, the role of audience as work (1981:22-52), and the commodity promotion as propaganda (1981:217-248).
In relation to capitalism and consumerism, there is a virtually endless amount of research data, going back most notably to such people as Weber, Durkheim and Marx. A few of the more interesting recent anthropological studies involve such things as the subjective notion of progress (e.g. Alonso 1988). Lane (1987) discusses the ambiguous difference between capitalism and culture among white-collar workers in Germany. Nava (1991) gives an interesting outline of theoretical perspectives on capitalism and consumerism, making a case for the active rather than passive consumer. Book-length studies about consumerism consulted here included philosophical works such as Campbell (1987) and Smythe (1981), and many that were in the area of anthropological popular culture, such as Browne (1980), Fiske (1989), and Browne, Fishwick and Browne (1990).

> Besides confusing the downwardly mobile with the poor, Americans tend to overlook these refugees from the middle class because their experience flies in the face of everything American culture stands for. From our earliest beginnings, we have cultivated a national faith in progress and achievement. The emphasis on success has always made it difficult for Americans to acknowledge defeat: No one talks about the Pilgrims who gave up and headed back to England. Our optimistic heritage stands in the way of recognizing how frequently economic failure occurs.
> (Newman 1989:8)

As Newman recognizes, this nationalistic "faith" in progress and achievement, has distinct qualities of religiosity. This contributes to Americans and Canadians not wanting to hear or admit that the middle classes in both countries are not doing very well[5]. Media, especially newspapers and television, are very important aspects of the social setting of this study. Because of social values of individual achievement and success through 'hard work,' the middle classes themselves do not want to hear about 'failures among them.' To members of the middle class, people on welfare represent the unfortunate and stigmatized 'other' or 'outgroup.' By identifying them as such, middle class employed individuals can feel much better about themselves and their condition.

This has serious consequences for middle class individuals who become dislocated, and begin 'sliding down the ladder of success,' as my research shows. Newspapers and other media are so full of stories about the plight of this group of 'others,' or welfare recipients. Middle class employed people have a very clear sense of what represents, to them, the 'bottom' of the socioeconomic 'ladder.' Of course, there may be a positive feeling knowing that you as an individual are not in this stigmatized category. Further, the employed can complain about having to be part of a category who through taxation has to support these unfortunate 'others.' Media, however, is selective, and it is almost never shown *where* these welfare recipients *came from*; the important thing is that they are just there, and can be unfavourably compared to (and by) the individual employed tax-paying person.

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[5] Some of the macroscopic contextual reasons for the increasing pressures on the Western middle-class in general include the "de-industrialization paradigm,' developed by Bluestone and Harrison (1982), and critically evaluated and elaborated upon by Hyderbrand (1989); Novek (1989); Hansen (1988); Newman (1985); DiLeonardo (1985) and Lamphere (1985). Focussing on the similar situation in Canada, McQuaig (1995) makes an argument for the devastating effects of a low-inflation policy, while Bellan (1989) argues the negative effects of high inflation for the Canadian middle-class.
Along with the above, some of the main work consulted which emphasizes the relationship of macroeconomic changes to restructuring at the workplace level includes Thompson and Ackroyd (1995); Metcalfe (1991); Streek (1987) and Cornfield (1983). For multidisciplinary case study information on effects of restructuring at the workplace level, and employee responses, please see Grimm and Dunn (1986); Hanson, Martin and Tuch (1987); Hodson (1987); Semyonov and Lewin-Eppstein (1989); Walsh (1989); Fineman (1993); Parkin (1993); Hodson, *et* al (1994); Marchington, *et* al (1994); Yoon, *et* al (1994); Kamoche (1995); Leana and Feldman (1995); Lim (1996); Stevenson and Bartunek (1996) and George and Jones (1997).

With further regards to the media, Schiller (1989) has written an expose on the takeover of western culture through corporate control of the media. It is obvious that the middle class 'reality' is not accurately portrayed. Middle-class downward mobility, for corporate and social value reasons, does not 'exist' in the media. There appears to be a material "glut" of consumer items, that, for corporate interest reasons, are constantly promoted as if enough consumers existed to buy them (Schiller 1989:158). Further, corporations have become international in focus.

Middle-class westerners are no longer the only (or even the main) potential consumers for most large corporations (Schiller 1989:160). Media usually had specific corporate control and interests that went hand in hand with a burgeoning middle-class in the 1950's. Today, the media no longer recognizes changes to the western middle-class. As Schiller mentions, these factors contribute to a lack of contextualized knowledge of the overall middle-class situation.

> A black hole of ignorance about transnational corporate activity is the outcome of systematic omission of information and its meaningful analysis. And, directly

> related, how can the xenophobic attitudes that arise from this ignorance be countered in an informational and political system that *uses* these impulses to divert attention from the actual sources of the national troubles? In this sense, the U.S. informational-cultural condition is similar to that in the dominated ex-colonial countries. In both, the control of the messages and imagery prevent an objective assessment of reality. They contribute instead to misconceptions that lend support to policies that benefit the few to the great disadvantage of the many.
> (Schiller 1989:171)

In relation to this study, the media has three distinct and central purposes or effects. As Schiller says, it is used to divert attention away from the objective political or economic reasons for recessive times. Secondly, it provides an intensive view of the plights of the 'other'; namely the lower classes and welfare recipients in Alberta. Most importantly perhaps, this corporate-controlled media constantly reinforces and thus socializes the middle class consumer. Dominant social values of material possessions as verification of individual hard work, and visible 'advertisement' of objectified values to other members of this middle class category are constantly in the mass-media.

As Newman (1989:9) shows, the lack of accurate contextual information is coupled with a strong and also media-reinforced work ethic. This means that the downwardly mobile middle class individuals may not know the contexts, or commonality of their situations.

> We are far more likely to "blame the victim" than to assume that systemic economic conditions beyond the influence of any individual are responsible. This tendency is so pervasive that at times even the individuals blame the victims, searching within to find the character flaw that has visited downward mobility upon them. Even they assume that occupational dislocation is somehow uniquely their problem. But the fact is, downward mobility has always been with us and exists in larger numbers than most of us realize. ...The fact that downward mobility happens so often, yet has not been institutionalized through social convention or public ritual, points to something very significant about the problem. Downward mobility is a hidden dimension of our society's experience because it simply does not fit into our cultural universe. The downwardly mobile therefore become an invisible minority - their presence among us unacknowledged.
> (Newman 1989:9)

Not all people today are socialized towards the individualistic work ethic, or accept work ethic tenets upon reflection; however, a controlled media likely acts in varying degrees to contextualize individual values, goals and self-perceptions, especially upon unemployment. On a commercial, one 'Bud' man states that "in this country if you work hard, good things will happen." A simple equation, apparently taken to heart by many middle class people, if they blame themselves for their circumstances. Of course, this means people would also tend to take individual credit for their circumstances, creating a sort of combination of a work ethic and a meritocracy as described by Newman (1989:42-94). This is especially relevant when the media constantly provides examples of people in worse situations; people we can feel sorry for, juxtaposed with examples of highly successful entrepreneurs.

[1a] The 'Muted' Middle-Class Unemployed

Middle-class people, in this case those who suffer dislocation from employment positions, are in general 'muted,' in that their situations are not discussed very much in the media or in popular culture, as Juravich (1990:81) mentions. A brief one-month survey of the most prominent Edmonton newspaper shows this to be the case; almost all articles about government cutbacks had to do with the plight of people on welfare, or those needing health services. Two articles mentioned the almost 500 nurses who lost their jobs in the city. Two other articles remarked on the 1,600 province-wide Alberta Liquor Control Board workers who lost their jobs as the government privatized this industry. Over 20 articles dealt with cuts to welfare recipients and their unpleasant situations as benefits were reduced so drastically, that 55,000 people were removed from the welfare system in Alberta.

This background, generally indicating increasing socio-economic pressures on the Western middle-class, contributes to the individual trauma of unemployment in specific settings where radical social and workplace restructuring is involved. Ralph Klein was initially elected as premier of Alberta under a campaign based on the strongly perceived need to reduce the provincial debt and deficit by budget reductions. Before outlining the specific effects of the budget cuts in Alberta, I will briefly mention the commonly perceived 'causal necessity' of deficit reduction. This perceived cause remains contextually important throughout this study, as many Albertans think of deficit reduction as a very necessary yet 'painful' process. It was upon this premise that Klein was initially elected. Deficit reduction is being used in many Western nations to justify budget cutbacks, and is highly promoted as necessitating drastic spending cuts which particularly affect the public service workforce.

[2] The Promotion of Deficit-Reduction

McQuaig (1995) makes a strong case in a book about the Canadian situation, that the federal governmental policy goal of "zero inflation" caused the affluent to thrive, and the middle and lower classes to experience a devastating recession. According to her, the associated high interest rates were the primary cause of high federal and provincial debts and deficits. McQuaig (1995:2) describes as a myth the idea that social and government spending were the causes of the debts and deficits. This 'myth,' promoted by the government, led to the led to the perception that debts and deficits now needed to be brought under control, creating layoffs that were more devastating in Alberta than in any other province.

> Commentators began to refer to what had happened in New Zealand, which figured prominently in the program, as proof of the disasters that lay ahead for debt-ridden Canada. Provincial governments studied the program as they geared up for their own deficit-slashing binges that spring. ... Nowhere did it have a greater effect than in Alberta, where the Conservative government of Ralph Klein constantly used New Zealand as a model.
>
> (McQuaig 1995:2)

When the perceived need for deficit-reduction is so heavily promoted, middle-class professionals in the public service area are viewed by many as part of 'the problem' in Alberta. There is little effective counter-voice to the measures taken by the Alberta Conservative government under the leadership of Klein. Strobel even mentions the dominance of "conservative economics spokespersons" among university economists, and their influence on public opinion.

> No segment of the economics profession has challenged, tested, and provided a timely and politically effective counter to the public opinion influence of the many conservative economics spokespersons. Rather, the profession has become progressively interested in partial equilibrium analysis on often obscure microeconomic topics... Increasingly, such publications are the means by which faculty earn a merit pay increase. Evaluating policy issues and publishing the results will hardly ever deliver tenure or a pay increase.
>
> (Strobel 1993:80-1)

The promoted need to cut social spending in Alberta also relegated the receivers of social assistance to a category of the perceived causal 'problem.' 'Abuses of the system' and the poor in general are constantly focussed upon in the media. To the increasingly stressed and insecure middle class individual, the results of this emphasis may be more than any simple deflection or assignation of blame. The effects of the budget cutbacks in Alberta, as outlined below, were only *in part* the result of a perceived need for deficit reduction and a promoted desire to create a positive atmosphere for business investment.

In certain professional occupational areas such as health care and municipal affairs, the cutbacks often meant that there were no longer any positions available in entire professional occupational fields. The work that these professionals had formerly done was often assigned to lesser-paid, less trained personnel, or in many cases the services they provided were rendered non-available.

What this means contextually in Alberta, and in many other places in Western society, is that the budget cutbacks represent a distinct social revolution towards the privatization or elimination of important public services. When services are maintained, they are often taken out of the government realm into the private sector, where less qualified persons are required to try to perform the 'same' duties as the formerly highly educated and trained professionals. This radical social change then includes elements of what is commonly called 'de-skilling' as well as the overworking of individuals who have the dubious 'advantage' of remaining in the now changed workplace positions. A key reason that this process is more of a social revolution than only a socioeconomic change is that it is widely promoted as necessary by government, and apparently supported by the majority of Albertans. The following section gives an outline of some of the changes that took place just prior to my fieldwork.

[3] Recent Budget Cutbacks In Alberta

Provincial budget cutbacks have been particularly drastic following the election of Ralph Klein as premier in June of 1993, on a platform of quick reduction of the provincial debt and deficit. The Klein administration wasted no time in carrying out budget cuts that affected almost all areas of the Alberta economy. There was a 5,000-person protest rally in

October, 1993, against the effects of cuts already introduced. In a related article in the Edmonton Journal, the effects to core services were described, even though the cuts then already implemented were only 'interim measure' reductions to be followed by the more severe ones in early 1994.

> The head of the 112,000-member [Alberta Federation of Labour] said Klein did not tell Albertans during the June election campaign how he intended to balance the budget. If he had, he wouldn't have been elected. "He didn't get elected on a platform of creating suffering for the unemployed, for single mothers and their children, or for the disabled. He didn't promise to reduce benefits to seniors or to close hospitals and lay off hundreds of nurses or take money from hard-pressed public sector workers." Since the budget year began in April 1, 152 Edmonton health-care workers have been laid-off, 13,000 Social Services recipients across Alberta have been cut off, and 1,500 Alberta Liquor Control board employees have received word that they'll be fired. Social Services has been cut by $154 million and Health by $189.5 million.
>
> (Edmonton Journal Oct. 23, 1993:A9)

Another newspaper article documented Klein's response to the protest rally, indicating his resolve not to react, although his election campaign had emphasized his willingness to always respond to input from the electorate.

> Many speakers chided Klein for refusing to attend Saturday's protest while accepting an invitation to an Edmonton Oilers rally a few weeks ago. The premier has said protestors can wave placards, stomp their feet and complain all they want, "but I'm not going to blink." He vows to eliminate the province's $3.4 billion deficit by 1997.
>
> (Edmonton Journal, October 24, 1993:A1)

The even more drastic funding cuts followed the introduction of the provincial budget in January of 1994. This budget affected many occupational areas, but perhaps none as dramatically as the public service sector occupations, in particular those within the area of municipal affairs. As the budget was announced, the Edmonton Journal Newspaper (January 19, 1994) headline read "Klein Drops The Axe." At this one stroke, 1.3 billion dollars were to be cut very quickly from the provincial budget. The story went on to outline the budget's main targeted areas, including cuts to school boards, advanced education cuts of 21% over three years, a further $100 million cut from welfare payments, and $14 million from day-care funding.

However, it was the Municipal Affairs Departments that could anticipate the largest percentage cutbacks, with an announced $230 million reduction in provincial funding and staff cuts of 50% over three years. The 50% reduction in Municipal Affairs staffing represented the loss of many different kinds of public service jobs, including individuals working in certain highly specialized fields. In the Edmonton Journal cover story, it was clear that cuts to the municipalities were not going to be made up by increases in personal or property taxes, and it was left to the individual municipalities to decide how to implement the staff cuts. The general perception implied that public service workers and departments were not delivering efficient services, and could afford the cuts. Many people interviewed in this study were public servants working in the area of municipal affairs. Most of them were of the opinion that as members of 'the' bureaucracy, they were not perceived by the public as core service workers, but as falling under the general category of unnecessary producers of the infamous 'red tape.'

> Klein would not comment on the number of layoffs coming, saying he didn't know. Jason Kenny, head of the lobby group the Association of Alberta Taxpayers, whose 31,000 members pay a $55 sign-up fee, is pleased Klein is following through on his promises. Despite the cuts to municipal grants, he cautioned Edmonton Mayor Jan Reimer not to increase city taxes to make up for the loss. "There's only one taxpayer and all three levels of government have got to understand that (federal, provincial and local). Follow Ralph Klein's lead and start delivering your services much more efficiently. Nobody's going to like these decisions but we're pleased the government hasn't taken the alternative which is to introduce job-killing taxes."

(Edmonton Journal, January 1994, A7)

Instead of increased personal or property taxes, there were layoffs combined with increased 'pay-for-services,' which imposed more pressures on already stressed consumers in much the same way as increased taxation would have. The next article shows one example of this process, as its headline reads "Medicare Coverage Cut Back: $17 Million Cost Shifted to Consumers." This kind of reduction in subsidized public services was a trend that would increase vastly in scope following the budget cutbacks.

> The provincial government is de-insuring $17.4 million in health care services, effective Dec. 1. Medicare coverage for the 14,500 general anaesthetics done annually for items such as wisdom teeth removal will be cancelled, Health Minister Shirley McClellan told a news conference Thursday. Also on the hit list are 393,000 routine eye exams for Albertans aged 19 to 64 and 369,000 wart removals at a cost of $10 to $40 a shot. The biggest cut - $13 million - comes from de-insuring eye exams for glasses or contact lenses. ... And more items could be de-insured after July 1, McClellan said.
>
> (Edmonton Journal, November 18, 1994:A1)

With this incredibly harsh budget, spending cuts on a large scale were accompanied by the understanding that municipal, health, education and other service administrations would be left on their own to try to implement the cuts on a personal level. There was no comprehensive provincial planning specifying which areas to be downsized or which personnel to cut. This was left to individual managerial personnel of local organizations. At this time, even the Canadian prime minister met with Klein to express his concern over the enormity of the provincial cuts, as this newspaper excerpt notes.

> "It's very nice to say cut, cut, cut, but when you do you create more unemployment. You can create a recession." Chretien told a radio call-in show. ...The prime minister told the talk show that cutting too fast imperils a fragile economic recovery. "You have to be very careful, because we're getting out of the recession. If you put everybody on welfare, you know you don't have any revenue, you just have payouts."

(Edmonton Journal, March 4, 1994:A1)

During the periods of the 'interim cuts' in 1993 which had been protested against to no avail, the lack of effect of those protests meant that when more severe cuts were introduced, there was a lack of protest, which one newspaper article described under a story headline of "'Burned-out Parents Silent Over Cuts."

> "I think the parents have given up," says Jenny Fehr, who has two children in Forest Heights elementary. "People are burned out by protesting for no gain." ... "So what do us little guys down here do about it?" Fehr asked. "I think there's a lot of frustration, a lot of worried parents, a lot of people saying 'it's not going to be as good next year, but what can you do?'" She thinks premier Ralph Klein planned it that way. Parents got steamed up, vented their frustration and got burned out when the cuts rolled around. Despite Klein's invitation to speak up, parents feel put down when they criticise the government, she said. " Every time they do make a protest, Mr. Klein says they're babies out for a Saturday afternoon stroll. I don't know what parents can do."
>
> (Edmonton Journal, February 13, 1994:A1)

The cutbacks continued unabated, and associated stresses and uncertainties began to make the front page news. Stories with headlines such as "Union Braces for 2,500 Govt Layoffs" become increasingly common.

> The expected announcement today of layoffs in the provincial government departments is just the "tip of the iceberg" when it comes to job losses," says the provinces biggest public sector union. ... Carol Anne Dean, president of the Alberta Union of Provincial employees, will be sitting by the phone waiting to hear the bad news from Labour Minister Stockwell day. ..."I'm willing to bet we hear about at least 2,000 to 2,500 members," Dean predicted Sunday night.
>
> (Edmonton Journal, January 24, 1994:A1)

Waiting to hear about expected layoffs created a heightened mood of insecurity among working people, as many other newspaper articles reflect. These articles show the more humanistic face of the cutbacks, with an anxiety and job insecurity which has remained until the present day. The following excerpts, and material in following chapters illustrate this. There is a new mood of insecurity among the middle-class, which affects their expectations, as is shown by my participants as well.

> Every time the phone rings in the government's print shop, Malcolm Archibald's pulse races with the fear that his layoff notice is coming. He's almost certain that he'll be on the hit list Monday morning when labour minister Stockwell Day reveals how many provincial employees will join the ranks of the unemployed this year.... "It's very disturbing, every time you hear the phone ring people practically have a heart attack... A lot of us here belong to the working poor you know. We have single moms making $23,000 a year." For months, he said, the tension has been building as rumours spread about the government closing the press shop and contracting printing services to the private sector.
> (Edmonton Journal, January 20, 1994:A1)

The future became unpredictable for people in insecure job positions, and even less certain for those who have received their layoff notices. These stories continued to be heard more frequently, like the following article, called "Shaken Workers Ponder Futures After Govt. Layoff."

> After 17 years on the job, plumber Don Getson was told to pack his toolbox and go home. The senior plumber at Alberta public works was told his position was redundant after June 1 and he no longer had a job. ... Getson says he was in shock on the drive home, where he had to break the news to his over-whelmed family. "You sort of feel like you're not a person - you're driving home and you don't have a job. You don't even feel like a man." He also doesn't know if he'll be able to keep up payments on his 2,300 square foot home they built. And he's not alone.
> (Edmonton Journal February 1, 1995:A1)

Between 1991 and 1995, public sector employment in Alberta was cut by 26,582 individual positions. This was just over a ten percent reduction in this area, representing a public sector cut in positions which was over twice that in any other province during this time. (Statistics Canada 1995; Catalogue no.72-209-XPB: table 1.1 p.32).

[4] The Unemployed Middle-Class Professional: An Unique Minority

According to a recent paper compiled by Donna Lero and Karen L. Johnson (1994), using data from Statistics Canada, the impact of the Klein budget cuts and subsequent job losses came at a time when the middle-class household had already been in what one could call a long-term recession.

> Growth in family income slowed markedly during the 1980s. Between 1981 and 1990, family incomes increased only 5% in real terms. this compares to an increase of 26% between 1971 and 1980, and an increase of fully 46% during the ten years between 1961 and 1970. Average family income decreased again in 1990 and again (by a further 2.6%) in 1991. when real family income is calculated using adjustments for inflation, it is estimated that real average family income in 1991 was only slightly higher than the level recorded in 1980.
>
> (Lero and Johnson 1994:12)

The situation of the middle-class professional unemployed people who participated in this research, is one of a particular kind of unemployment which is not focussed upon or commonly presented either in everyday discourse or in the folk literature. Middle-class professional unemployed persons find themselves in an unique kind of situation in which their plight and problems are neither popular topics for discussion, nor for social recognition. Although there is much recent discussion in newspapers and other folk media about the increasing pressures on the middle-class in general, the individual middle-class person finds that once they have joined the ranks of the unemployed, they are 'invisible' in many ways.

To my knowledge, one of the most severely affected middle-class occupational areas was that of land-use planning. It was also one of the least publicized of the affected occupations in the area of municipal affairs; I could not find even a single article in any newspaper describing the effects of cuts to Regional Planning Commissions, which amounted to 100% of provincial subsidization, representing 63% of their operating budgets. The area of regional land-use planning, which now had to reduce regional workplace budgets by 63%, seemed to be a very appropriate locale in which to study some of the human experiences and effects of downsizing-related experiences of unemployment. These individuals were members of a particularly hard hit and highly specialized occupational area, and specific workplaces that were practically eliminated. In the next two sections, I outline the importance of specific occupational and workplace contexts, respectively.

[5] The Specific Occupational Context of Regional Land-Use Planning

Regional land-use planning was implemented in Alberta in 1950, with the establishment of a regional office in Edmonton, and this regional system has been in place and further developed continuously since then. (Planning in Alberta 1977:77). The regional system had developed five main themes represented in the Planning Act of 1977, as shown below. Since then these themes have been elaborated upon and refined by regional planners working in various planning commissions around Alberta. Due to the recent decision by provincial advisors in the Klein administration, the Planning Act can no longer be developed and refined, since this was part of the job of regional land-use planners. Although the Planning Act remains 'on the books,' it is more of a guideline now, with few professionals remaining to make sure that municipalities or developers adhere to the provisions, although the provisions are still intended to be utilized. This means that, while the Planning Act is still intended as provincial legislation, the removal of most of the professionals from this occupational area has effectively rendered the Act almost completely superficial.

The five main themes (Planning in Alberta 1977:7-12) within the planning act may be annotated as follows:

(1) ***System for Orderly Land Development***

The Community and the Individual: Thumbnail Sketch of a System:

Over a period of years, in a number of jurisdictions, a system has been developed in which the community:

- sets out the sorts of developments it would like to see, through creation of a plan or set of plans; and
- establishes certain bylaws - and other devices - as a means of implementing in detail the broad concepts expressed in the plan.

It is then the responsibility of the individual property owner to ensure that his development conforms with the plan, zoning and other relevant bylaws.

Enforcement of the community's wishes is accomplished by requiring any property owner wishing to develop his land to obtain prior approval from the government for:

- the subdivision of land (by means of a subdivision approval), or
- any change in the use of land or buildings (by means of a development permit).

Most systems for ensuring the orderly development of land have means for dealing with or ensuring citizen participation; appealing against unfavourable or improper decisions; solving special development problems or technicalities; recognizing the wishes of the broader community; and ensuring conformity to the community's wishes.

(2) ***Strengthening Local Autonomy***

An examination of both the old and new Planning Acts reveals that the greatest power to control urban and rural land use developments rests with locally elected officials, and not with the provincial government, its elected representatives or bureaucrats. This is especially true in the case of land use development that does not require subdivision....

In addition to its local planning powers, a municipality also has considerable power to affect planning at the regional level and protect the interests of its local citizens. Although local municipalities' plans must conform to the provisions of a regional plan, each local community has considerable opportunity to influence the contents of a regional plan. As one example, a regional plan must be adopted by two-thirds majority of the members of a regional planning commission. The membership of a commission, however, is composed of elected officials from local municipalities, thus ensuring local input in a regional plan.

(3) ***Keeping the Time Required to Bring Land Onto the Market to a Minimum.***

The burgeoning growth of Alberta communities over the last decade has created intense pressures on the land development system to create land for housing and other urban uses. This is a complex process involving speculators, developers, builders, financiers and others, in addition to planners and government officials. A large urban residential development requires over a thousand decisions from the early "interest" stage to the actual occupancy by the individual, stretched over a span of several years.

Government intervenes in this process to ensure that provision has been made for roads, utilities, school and park reserves, and that every effort has been made to meet health and safety requirements. This requires review by a number of professional people, lodged in several departments.

Recent studies have indicated that only 15 to 20 percent of these thousands of decisions rest with government; nevertheless, if the length of time government takes to process applications can be kept to a minimum, the development of land will be quickened.

Hence, the Subdivision Regulation that accompanies the Planning Act, 1977 has been rewritten, and in many instances simplified, in order to decrease the number of regulations that must be met by prospective developments, resulting in a reduced processing time for applications.

(4) ***Recognition of Broad Provincial and Regional Concerns.***

The recognition that there are land development issues which are local and municipal, and others which are regional in focus, is an important element in recent Planning Acts. Whether an expanded arterial road should slice through a park or a neighbourhood of old homes is clearly a local issue, whereas the location of a new expressway joining that community with another is an inter-municipal or regional concern.

Similarly, the legislation recognizes the well-established tradition that the provincial government has an interest in land development and its control and management and may, on occasion, wish to participate in the process. To extend the analogy, the province must make decisions to fund expressways versus subways, to upgrade its system of secondary roads before contributing to major highway development, and so on. Its interests extend over many regions and hundreds of municipalities, so it narrows its sights and permits the other levels to deal with their concerns, intervening only when there is the potential for conflict between its goals and those of the municipality.

(5) ***Encouragement of the Fullest Public Participation in the Process.***

In any process as complex and multi-faceted as planning in Alberta, it is difficult to achieve a balance between the interests of those who keep the process operating - the planners, "experts" and elected officials - and those for whom it is being operated - the individual citizen. The Planning Act, 1977, is cognisant of this problem, and has dealt with it in two ways:

1. control over the process is vested with elected representatives, and
2. citizens are given specific opportunities to become directly involved and to communicate their opinions to the "experts" and the elected officials.

(Planning in Alberta: A Guide and Directory 1977:7-11)

This brief outline of the main themes included in the Alberta Planning Act (1977) form the basis for subsequent versions. They illustrate some of the main reasons that this specific occupation is so highly valued by the persons interviewed in this study. Contextually, it is sufficient for now to realize that to the professionals within this occupational sphere, the services that they provided for the public were seen as crucial, both in the short and long-term. As the above thematic outline shows, these people were actively involved with creation and development of regional planning systems which would be consistent at the regional and provincial levels, and accommodate the concerns of individual municipalities as well. This was a highly interactive process, and ultimately decisions and innovations made at the regional level would filter their way 'up' to continually revise and improve the Alberta Planning Act itself. As the above points show, these planning commissions were involved in cooperative decision-making with municipal representatives, on everything from subdivision zoning, road location, school and park locations, and many decisions involving environmental concerns which would affect the region in the long-term.

As professionals in this area, and working within a regional planning commission with a variety of persons in complementary positions, sharing valuable resources, they were able to provide services which would not otherwise be available, especially to the smaller municipalities with fewer resources. Upon the decision of the Klein administration to cut provincial funding for these regional commissions altogether, they effectively eliminated an entire occupationally-based regional system which revolved around a Planning Act which had been in place and revised since 1950. The significance of the elimination of positions in this case always had to do with the individual's belief in the long-term importance of the field to the communities. Of course, most workers likely consider their jobs as being an asset to society in some way. The above material is presented as a contextually specific outline of why these particular professionals valued their specific occupational roles.

[6] The Centrality of Specific Occupation and Workplace Together

In order to present a more personalized account of the importance of the occupational field, in this case integrated with the specific workplace setting, let me now turn to an interview for a further situational perspective. The individual whose comments are summarized below had recently retired from a senior land use planning management position, and the observations made below are consistent with those of many other individuals who had worked for twenty or more years in the same workplace.

P. To put this into perspective, when I started back in 1971 there were about 15 of us, and in less than a decade it had mushroomed up to about 34 people. So at the peak we had the director, we had 4 people at the management level, and we had 4 people that acted as supervisory team leaders, and then we had a senior draftsman. So you had 3 management levels, the director, manager, supervisory and then workers, so it always looked like as many chiefs as Indians. You had ten people with supervisory or management positions, so that was about a third of the staff. And then there was a budget cut in the early eighties, and the commission was told that it would be reduced over 3 years by 40%. And it was left to the individual commissions as to how they would cut. So that resulted in cuts at all levels. So the commission over about 20 years has gone from 15 people, up to, well actually 40 people including those with temporary contracts, and shrunk back down to 20. So that has been the pattern. And the workload also grew. There is a tremendous elasticity in the workload.

During the period when we had such a large staff, most of the planning was long-term planning development. For most of the planning commissions, long-range planning is in a sense a luxury. It's almost like an academic study. It's useful, it's very hard to say objectively how valuable and reflective it is. But with budgets, there were huge federal grant to municipalities, provided they had a plan. So what you had was these huge infusions of money, in both the public and private sector planning agencies.

In times of reduced budgets, planning agencies are always a little vulnerable, and when budgets are cut, it's always the long-range planning development that is lost. So the commission having gone down in numbers in the early eighties, could still function effectively, since they could still do the short-range planning advising.

If the budget is gone to the point to where the commission has to close its doors, the question is where are these municipalities going to go for planning advice? Particularly the small municipalities, that can't afford private sector planning. So the small municipalities would probably dispense with a lot of planning. and in the short term, they might not miss it, and say "we can get along without it." Because in the first 5 years or so the council members would still have enough of an awareness of the planning knowledge. But after the council members change, the new ones coming in would not have this knowledge, and over time the quality of life in these municipalities would decrease.

R. What about the influence of all the pressure from the large businesses and developers?

P. Without the planners, you don't have the offsetting arguments. And I think more and more realistically, I think what is quite often a negotiated situation won't be there. Developers are almost always in competition with other developers. So if a developer can go into a municipality and get an edge, that's the nature of business. And what the planners do is go in and say, "these are the ground rules you should apply." When the planners are no longer there, then they start to compromise things. And then the developers get the advantage in that way. And the planners can also go in there and give advice on alternative ways to the municipalities and to the developers, which are closer to the established ground rules. And it is ways that are more beneficial to the developers and to the communities, so it's a win-win situation then.

I think in the minds of the cities and the public, unfortunately I think it's the regulatory side that's mostly seen, the "you can't do this or that" side. And most planners, as opposed to say, someone at an authority level, such as the administrative people, most planners are far more comfortable being involved with negotiating and coming up with creative solutions. Some commissions are more concentrated on the regulatory side, and that's the way they operate, and there's no negotiation. Unfortunately, that's the easier way, but that is not the way this commission operated. And during the latest cutbacks, most commissions have had to sacrifice their design planners. And these people are necessary in order for the new subdivisions to be attractive, to have more saleable lots, which will rise in value and be beneficial to the developer and the community in the long term. Both in terms of the tax revenue, and the image of the community. It may be a nice main street development, it may be a nice industrial park, it may be nicer subdivisions or recreational parks, but the more of these a community has, the more chance they have of attracting good businesses. Because the businesses look for these things when they decide where to locate. They look at the community in terms of attracting and keeping the kinds of workers that they need.

In relation to the provincial cutbacks, because planning is so vulnerable, and not seen as a core service, the approach that was taken. since the commissions were subsidized 63% by the provincial government, it was not cut to 30% or 20%, it was cut to zero. Klein and his advisors, and I think it was centrally his advisors, said "this is a municipal thing, and if the municipalities want planning, they can pay for it." They failed to recognize that the cumulative benefits of planning benefit the province, because they give Alberta's communities a collective edge over those in other provinces. But part of the economics of the cuts, it's hard to quantify, but if you did a large survey, say of the provinces or the American States, there is a tremendous support for planning. And I think Canada is moving away from decentralization, towards the model of the States, so that's creating a tremendous diversity. And diversity is a great thing on one hand, but on the other hand, there has to be some consistency in planning. And part of it is the tremendous diversity in the geographic regions in Canada. In a regional planning system, that gave a regional consistency among the communities in that region.

R. Since the planning commissions have lost almost all of their planners now, and each one used to have a particular group of municipalities that they were very familiar with and responsible for, the remaining planners are saying that they are spending all of their time now trying to catch up and give advice to municipalities and regions that they are not very familiar with. They are apparently spending all of their time trying to catch up on specific information and deal with a workload that is unmanageable, and cannot do any developmental planning, negotiation, and the creative work which was their purpose before the cuts. One person mentioned that what would have taken the planner who was concentrating on a specific municipality ten minutes to answer, now takes him an hour to answer. It's so essential that there is some neutral negotiator in the relations of the developers and the municipalities, but that seems to be going by the wayside now.

P. The province did set down certain ground rules for such things as subdivision requirements. So there still is advisory information for these things. I think that one of these things that will be beneficial, at least for the rest of this decade, is that during the times when the commission was so large, is that so much of the long-term planning development was done at that time. So there was that very strong foundation with which to make planning decisions. So that has a certain momentum of it's own. A lot of the decision-making now is at the local level. And that on the balance is desirable. What I can envision happening over the next 5 years is this gradual erosion of this foundation taking place. So if planners are spread thin, I would suspect they will not have the time to go to every municipality council meeting and things like that that they did before, and keep in close touch to advise and comment.

So I can foresee two things happening, the erosion of this foundation, and if there is a resurgence of economic development in the province, then the need for planning could triple very quickly, and if there are not the resources, then a lot of very bad decisions will be made. I think evidence of this could be seen between 5 and 10 years, when they will just not have the resources for a lot of things.

A lot of our emphasis was on getting public input, we did surveys and had usually a 40% turnout, which is very high, and part of it was to give people information on what we were trying to achieve, and at the same time getting input on what municipal members had as priorities. This kind of reciprocal contact will not be able to continue. I think the other point I should make here is that the large cities, when a city gets to a certain size, the breadth and depth of planning services gets much more developed, and they'll have their own in-house planning departments. But the small municipalities, on their own, cannot afford to have these kinds of services.

And some of the bad decisions are going to be very costly to be repaired. In areas of human resource services, recreation, parks, and land-use planning are not going to be practical. They are only practical on a regional system, where the small municipalities shared the subsidized services of the regional planning commission. and that is no longer possible. In this way, planning falls into the same category of school systems and health care systems, that are regional systems. This is a political move by the provincial administration of downloading. It makes a lot of sense for them to do this.

They are downloading costs and cutting corners by cutting these kinds of subsidized services for the small municipalities, while Ottawa has to raise taxes in order to send their transfer payments to the provinces, and the provinces shout and scream if these transfer payments are not sent, while the provinces cut services and don't have to raise taxes. They are making the transfer payments go further, but they don't want to look like the bad guys. So the municipalities are being told, not only in planning, "you want it, you pay for it", so the municipalities have to raise taxes. And they mostly have to do this by raising property taxes, and some business taxes. but they are very constrained in how they can raise taxes. They usually have to raise taxes in the area of the homeowner, so that they can still remain competitive to the business sector. But there is a cyclical effect in that they soon lose their competitiveness since people just don't want to live there and so businesses also don't want to move there.

So the small communities are being hurt very badly by this economic and political process, and for the other reasons we have discussed. And this is a very difficult position. and of course, politicians at all levels, and observers, and academics, all put their hands over their hearts and talk about the values of the small community. The reality is that there are certain economic and social realities that are held in small communities, and you have to have some grasp and understanding and deal with those. And although it's a very small field academically, it's starting to grow lately. And since the budget cutbacks, the way I like to describe development is sort of a trinity. You have to help the community develop it's own resources, so you have community development, you have economic development, which the province had subsidized to some extent, and then you have land-use planning. And the three complement each other very well. And we've had some very dramatic success stories in mobilizing development in many communities. And with the budget cutbacks, the small communities just simply cannot afford the resources to build upon, in order to attract businesses or residents and continue to develop. They cannot mobilize the resources of the small community in order to turn themselves around. and there is very, very heavy competition for this kind of thing. This falls within the same broad umbrella - small communities can do a lot on their own, but they need that regional services umbrella to a certain extent, so that they don't have to use all of their resources to provide inefficient individualistic services for themselves, and do without long-term developmental planning.

In Alberta, they're now belatedly starting to see the benefits of regional systems for small communities. But it's not just education or public health or land-use planning, which are the three traditional sort of categories, that the provincial mechanisms have put into place. Informally, many communities have gotten together for such things as fire protection and these kinds of services. but provincially in Alberta, the province has not gotten involved in supporting these kinds of mechanisms and organizations. If they're flexible enough, and carefully planned out, and designed to suit their needs, then they have a lot of benefits and are very functionally efficient and supportive in the long term. The benefits I think are self-evident. The regional land-use planning system was designed for this purpose, and instead of dismantling this kind of regional system, I think they should have greatly expanded the functions and services of these regional systems. The problem in many cases is that as soon as we try to establish these kinds of regional systems, we have a sort of reflexive response towards the effect that "we don't want a regional government," so it has to be very carefully introduced, and also be structured so that each community can join or drop out of the system, as well as only using the system for only the services that the specific community wants. And it's nothing new, people who object to this haven't done their homework.

This is the third time now that they have amalgamated the provincial school boards in Alberta. Back before WWI, there were close to 4,000 school boards in Alberta, and after that they were shrunk to about 1,200, and then in the late '30's they were shrunk again to oh, 4 or 500. So it's nothing new, it's just another form of amalgamation. Before WWI, almost literally, in most rural parts of the province, there was a school board for almost every single school. And you can look at this in relation to the regional land-use planning commission system. When each separate schoolhouse had their own school board, they can get highly parochial. One school board might say "we're not going to teach this certain thing in our school." And those students could be tremendously disadvantaged. So the larger entity, which has to be an optimum size, since if it gets too large, it loses touch, and if it's too small it can become very parochial, it contributes to equality, whether it's health care, or education, or planning.

Certainly, with the regional planning system gone, some of these communities, on their own, would try to embrace planning, whether they're bringing in their own consultants or whatever, but others of them might say, "it doesn't matter about planning, development is inherently good no matter how or where it's done." And that's one of the unfortunate things, because land-use planing always tries to stress the long-term development in terms of the environment as well. and some of these bad decisions, are almost impossible to reverse.

You can't take the clock back regarding the environment. Say for example you do a rather rush development in a suburb and people decide to have 3 or 4 acre plots, in an area that may sometime become an concentrated urban area. Suddenly these people have 3 or 4 acre parcels. You would either have to negotiate replotting of these parcels, or you have to acquire them one by one and disassemble them. and there are some real horror stories like this. In Winnipeg at the early part of the century at one time, they subdivided enough plots for the entire population of Canada. And not in a terribly rational way. In the Crowsnest pass and North Vancouver, and places like that, they simply laid them out in a rectangular grid pattern that made no sense. They looked good on paper, but they were not geographically practical. And people bought these plots, and they passed from generation to generation. and some owners lived in Arizona, or someplace. And the municipality would say, now we can subdivide in a rational way, but we have to subdivide them in a rational way. And they sent letters to the owners, and they would not be interested in selling, and they might be living in Europe or someplace.

[he gave many other examples of the dramatically disastrous effects of lack of *long-term land-use planning*]

The observations made by the retired senior planner above serve to show the central importance attached to both the occupational purpose and to the specific workplace environment. In the case of the regional planning system, it is obvious that the system itself cannot survive without adequate human resources in the workplace. Many studies of the unemployed centrally examine unemployment in terms of dislocation from work and the stigma of non-work. This is certainly a relevant and important focus[4], but it tends to de-emphasize more personalized, smaller-scale considerations. Wallman makes the good point that the concept of work as an aspect of social and individual self-assessment is a social value that often remains in place, not adjusting to macroscopic socio-economic change, or "lagging behind" as she puts it:

> Since the social system is in process, so must be the identity investment in work. Some changes in identity patterns occur through historical time, usually following developmental changes in technology or organization such that the economic value of particular forms of work is altered. *Often there is a lag in the change.*
> (Wallman 1979:17 [*emphasis mine*])

More recent studies have increasingly concentrated on the importance of specific workplace conditions, interactions, working environment and so forth[5]. It becomes increasingly obvious that in order to attempt a more holistic understanding of experiences of unemployment, it is important to contextualize these accounts in relation to individual perceptions of experiences of dislocation from specific occupational and workplace niches. This specific contextualization is, of course, not possible in studies of the unemployed which use a large interview population, and must concentrate on more general facets of the experience of unemployment. This study, however, concentrates on a small group of professionals, in a very specific occupational area, as well as within a relatively small workplace environment.

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[4] All studies of experiences of unemployed individuals must include the relevance of this fundamental Western ideological dichotomy between work and non-work. Some of the better of these include Wadel (1973), Burman (1988), Newman (1989) and Howe (1990). However, none of these book length studies of unemployment emphasize the central importance of specific occupation, and even less the specific workplace niche and interaction. Some of the most useful book length studies directly focussing on the work/non-work ideological dichotomy in Western society include Simon (1971), Wallman (1979) and Sykes (1988).

[5] In more recent studies, (e.g. Buss and Redburn 1988) social ranking related to occupational position is usually linked to the more individualistic factors affecting job satisfaction, and therefore includes a great variety of variables, suggesting that it is much more than objective position which affects meaningful relative social ranking by individuals. For example, see Yoon, Baker and Ko (1994), Marchington, Wilkinson, Ackers and Goodman (1994) and George and Jones (1997).Studies which do emphasize workplace dynamics are usually about the employed, not the unemployed. Some of the more informative book-length ones used in this study include Kelly and Clegg (1982) "Autonomy and Control in the Workplace"; Rothschild and Whitt (1986) "The

As will be obvious in following chapters, the individuals interviewed for this study constantly related their state of unemployment to their previous specific occupational and workplace positions. As my research progressed, it became increasingly apparent that specific workplace and unemployment experiences could not be separated. Fineman notes that emotional identities and identification with specific workplaces have tended to be left out of studies of organizations, although they are integral to any organizational system. As he says.

> A book about feelings should not be strange to anyone who has worked in an organization. It should not seem odd to those who have tried to organize others, or have been subjected to management efforts. Emotions are within the texture of organizing. They are intrinsic to social order and disorder, working structures, conflict, influence, conformity, posturing, gender, sexuality and politics. They are products of socialization and manipulation. they work mistily within the human psyche, as well as obviously in the daily ephemera of organizational life. Although we might know this, it seems to be uncomfortable knowledge. Writers on organizations have successfully 'written out' emotions, to the extent that it is almost impossible to detect their existence.
>
> (Fineman 1993:1)

Cooperative Workplace"; Hage and Powers (1992) "Post-Industrial Lives" and Fineman (1993) "Emotion in Organizations."

Emotions and individual self-perceptions are related both to work itself, and to the specific workplace or organization. Many recent studies on the dynamics of workplace environments are clearly illustrating this. As George and Jones put it, even the studies of workplace dynamics have often isolated and emphasized certain variables, without considering them in interaction or using a holistic perspective. According to them, this isolation of variables does not allow for a proper understanding of the experience of work.

> At a most general level, the experience of work refers to the feelings, thoughts and beliefs people have about *work in general* and *their jobs and organizations in particular*. These feelings, thoughts and beliefs which describe how people experience work have been studied vis-a-vis the construct of work values, attitudes and moods. While progress has been made in terms of understanding the nature, antecedents, and consequences of work values, attitudes and moods, we still do not have an adequate understanding of how, together, they encapsulate the experience of work and the consequences of this experience for the behaviour of individuals in organizations. ... While each of these constructs represents an important aspect of the work experience, considering them in isolation from each other, as has been customary in the past, provides an incomplete and inadequate perspective on the work experience.
>
> (George and Jones 1997:394, [*emphasis mine*])

George and Jones' (1997) observation about the contextual problems in any holistic understanding of experience when variables are "isolated", is carefully acknowledged here. In this study the main contextual understanding is the futility of conceptually isolating the two main related considerations of specific occupation and workplace dynamics, and specific individual experiences of unemployment.

[7] Chapter Summary

To briefly restate the main contextual and situational aspects of this study as outlined in this chapter, the context of societal ideology regarding the dichotomy between work and non-work, as it applies to individual experiences and self-perceptions, remains as an underlying framework. Situationally, the drastic budget cutbacks of the Klein administration in Alberta provide a more specific context. This involves not only the loss of jobs, but dramatic social change including a 'de-skilling' process, the taking on of additional duties by less qualified workers, and in some cases the almost complete abolition of entire occupational areas. The regional land-use planning system is one of those areas which has practically been eliminated, along with the workplace organizations which were responsible for implementing the Planning Act. Although the Act itself remains technically in effect, the individuals who were responsible for its implementation and development are largely gone, and the act remains as a guideline only.

Taking into consideration the central importance of both specific occupation and particular workplace positions and dynamics, the context of unemployment has to be integrated with the context of former working experiences. Finally, the middle-class professional as a general group remain distinctly marginal in the media, even while they are some of the individuals most affected by the budget cutbacks. These general and specific contextual and situational considerations give the necessary background framework for the interview and theoretical material which follows.

The importance of an ethnographic case study of this kind does not have to do with elucidating the experiences of misery of the unemployed. Rather, this study has to do with the effects, at a social and individual level, of provincial government policy implementation, which represents important social change. Social and ideological values and changes are standard subjects of anthropological study, and social change almost always comprises a chapter in any introductory anthropology text. It is far more common to see examples of the influence of western values and technology and so forth, as they affect social change among the 'exotic' Third-World 'other.'

This study takes a very different approach; here social change within western society is examined, as it affects not the 'exotic,' but the relatively invisible members of mainstream society. Unemployment, within this context of social change, is examined here not as if the unemployed were some ambiguous category somehow dislocated from 'positive' societal ideology revolving around the work ethic. Instead, in this study, I examine the state of unemployment in direct relation to the specifics of the importance of the personalized former workplace.

In this study then, we are not only looking at the misery of the unemployed; we are attempting to gain some insight into the relationship between the meaningfulness o the former occupation, the ties between the occupation, workplace and self, and the consequent meaningfulness of becoming dislocated from the intricacies of all of the above. All of this examination of meaningfulness is wrapped within the multiple pre-existing and ever-changing contexts. Here, a striking situation of rapid social change contributes to the 'articulation' of the personal meaningfulness of cultural dynamism, process and practice.

CHAPTER TWO:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are three main sections in this chapter. In the first section, I review the main theoretical concepts that provided a framework in this study. In the second section I briefly outline some of the theoretical and case study material relating to variation in the experience of unemployment, and some of the more useful literature about variation in social-psychological effects of unemployment. The literature on variation among the unemployed is as diverse as studies about differing experiences of occupational roles and workplaces. One of the important variables in these areas is, of course, that of gender. A short review of relevant theoretical and case study material related directly to gendered work and unemployment experiences is included in the third section. The outline in this chapter is quite succinct, since the following theoretical approaches are all elaborated in depth along with interview data in following chapters.

[1] Outline of Main Theoretical Approaches Chosen in This Study

[1a] Initial Theoretical Concepts

The three main theories that formed the initial framework going into this study were the social anthropological elaborations on theoretical concepts of experiences of stigma, marginality and liminality. These three theoretical concepts have already been applied to the experience of unemployment by the four main well-regarded books that I drew upon as a basis for this work: Howe (1990), Newman (1989), Burman (1988) and Wadel (1973).

Societal ideological constructs appear to assign an inherent positive value to the worker as the societally 'productive,' and the unemployed as the unproductive 'taker.' Due to this, the latter may be expected to experience varying degrees of alienation in the form of stigma, marginality and even the 'non-structural,' 'non-position' of liminality.

Briefly, the concept of stigma, introduced in the social sciences mainly by Goffman, (1963) and further developed by many other researchers, is now a commonly understood term. It refers to the individual (or societal category) being assigned negative characteristics by the majority. Stigmatization can occur centrally in self-perception, or in objectively observable ways by others. In an endless variety of ways, the stigmatized individual may feel recognizably inferior in personal qualities or characteristics from the societal 'norm.' Among the unemployed, stigmatization is a dynamic process. It involves a transition from feeling that they possess positive qualities and characteristics, (objectified and reinforced by their occupational position, associated lifestyles and possessions) to losing these positive self-concepts upon the loss of the ability to *objectify* them.

The concept of marginalization is related to that of stigma, and both are integrated with dominant values. As I will show, however, marginalization is specifically the experience of feeling left out of the mainstream, or on the margins of society. Like stigma, marginalization can centrally involve perceptions of the self in relation to others, or be objectifiably observable in social interaction, or a combination of both. Feeling of stigma and/or marginalization may subjectively and objectively characterize the unemployed individual, contributing to difficult social interaction, or direct avoidance of interaction. Avoidance may be seen even among close personal friends or family members.

Liminality or the liminal state are concepts used in many studies of unemployment, including Burman (1988) and Newman (1988). Liminality was first introduced by Van Gennep (1960) as a theoretical concept in the context of rites of passage. He identified the liminal state as the second of three stages in a transition ritual. The transitions begin with a dislocation from existing status and familiar social structure. The second stage is the liminal or transitional state, in which the individual is in a sort of positional 'limbo'; not having a clear place in normative social structure. The final stage is reincorporation into a new position in the social structure.

Victor Turner (1967, 1969, 1974, 1977) spent much of his academic career elaborating upon this theoretical conceptualization of the transitional ritual and particularly the state of liminality. He assigned characteristic qualities to the state, the most notable being that of the special bond and temporary feelings of community and common purpose evidenced between people who had been removed from normative social structure as a group, which he termed "communitas" (elaborated upon in Turner 1974, 1977, 1986).

In some of his later works, Turner began to apply the concept of liminality in various secular and industrial societal contexts. (Turner 1977, 1986) All of Turner's work was done within the context of symbolically meaningful collective practice. This is the context which I have chosen as the basis of this study. Newman uses Turner's definition of liminality to show the way this theory can apply to the dislocated unemployed individual, and contribute interactively with effects of stigmatization and marginalization. Here, Newman begins by using Turner's original context of the tribal initiation rite, and then moves on to the context of the unemployed:

> ...During the liminal phase, the ordinary rules of social life are suspended. Because this is an extraordinary departure from normal life, it inspires in young people - just as it does in the unemployed managers- feelings of drift or chaos that come with the loss of a solid social role. ...They are truly "betwixt and between..."..Taboos occur in situations where cultural categories that are normally distinct become blurred. ...Unemployed and underemployed executives are anomalous creatures too. Their existence is as threatening to the cognitive order of managerial culture as tabooed creatures are to some tribal peoples. The talented ex-manager is a living contradiction.... his former business associates cannot wish him away. They, who know his talents well, cannot look their downwardly mobile colleague in the eye because they can't cope with the threat that his existence poses to their world view.
>
> (Newman 1989:91-92)

In my research, I use many of Turner's elaborations, and apply the concept of liminality to the experience of dislocation from structured societal values and categorisations, as well as dislocation from the more highly meaningful parameters of the specific occupational field and workplace structure.

These theoretical perspectives were central to the guiding of my initial research. I completed my first round of interviewing, structured in a deductive sense by the theoretical frameworks discussed above, but inductive as well due to my loosely-structured interviewing. The emphasis which came from the participants necessitated a re-evaluation of the theoretical framework. Although the concepts outlined above remained relevant, it became obvious that they could not adequately frame much of the experiential narrative of my participants. The following theoretical perspectives seemed to best address this issue.

[1b] Further Theoretical Approaches

The central emphasis of almost all of my participants was upon their specific workplace environment and 'atmosphere.' Also central was the importance of their occupationally-specific educational development, directed towards use of this knowledge which is objectified by application in the particular workplace. I turned towards a few other theoretical perspectives, in order to be able to frame this additional information in a way that would reflect more accurately the way these experiences were expressed.

I apply Bourdieu's elaboration on what he calls the "habitus", in this case mainly the dynamic collective habitus of the workplace. As Bourdieu describes the habitus, it is very applicable in the context of the workplace dynamism described by my participants.

> One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectively* secured consensus of the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words, the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences. The homogeneity of habitus is what - within the limits of the group of agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation) implied in their production - causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted.
>
> (Bourdieu 1977:80)

I also incorporate Bourdieu's extensive work on the dynamics and distinct logic of intellectual fields, in this case using his observations in the context of the occupational field. Bourdieu elaborated on both the field and the habitus in many works. (1977; 1984; 1991; 1992; 1993). I elaborate on the importance of the collective habitus and the centrality of the field to individual identity, in the context of the specific workplace. I also incorporate Bourdieu's perspective emphasizing a dynamic individual agency in both being shaped by an occupationally and socially framed environment, as well as contributing to shaping the environmental parameters themselves.

The second main theoretical perspective used has to do with the importance of ritual, and ritualization as constituting meaning-creating processes. Here this is related to the development of individual interests through the post-secondary education process. This ritualized process is seen as development of specific occupational knowledge, along with individual self-development. This dualistic developmental process is designed towards application in a specific workplace, and the ability to progress further within the workplace continues to be a main value. I rely heavily on a few key works in this section, in particular that of Bell (1992), in which she examines ritual theoretical perspectives, and stresses an understanding of ritual in terms of ritualization as a dynamic process. In that way the concept is consistent with the process of meaning-creation offered by Bourdieu's stress on individual "agency" and "practice."

> First, human activity is situational, which is to say that much of what is important to it cannot be grasped outside of the specific context in which it occurs. When abstracted from its immediate context, an activity is not quite the same activity. Practice may embody determinate influences deriving from other situations, but practice is not the mere reflection or effect of these influences. ...As a second feature of human activity, practice is inherently strategic, manipulative and expedient ...Practice, therefore, is a ceaseless play of situationally effective schemes, tactics and strategies - "the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation." ... A fourth characteristic of practice, closely intertwined with the features of situationality, strategy and misrecognition, has to do with the motivational dynamics of agency, the will to act, which is also integral to the context of action. ...the context of practice, Bourdieu stresses, is never clear cut but full of indeterminacy, ambiguities, and equivocations.
>
> (Bell 1992:81-83 [I omit Bell's third feature of misrecognition here, as it is not necessary at this point in my text])

Bell's theoretical view on ritualization as process is consistent with many established anthropological ritualists. The main anthropologists used along with Bell and Turner in providing ritual theoretical framing here include Leach (1980), Bocock (1974), Bloch (1986, 1989) and Kertzer (1988); also incorporated are Gluckman (1962), Moore and Myerhoff (1977), Wilentz (1985), Goodman (1988), Holmberg (1989), Sered (1992) and Ian Morris (1992).

The theoretical frameworks and concepts mentioned above help us understand some of the dynamics involved in the specific occupation, the specific workplace and the process of self-development leading up to workplace participation and subsequent interaction in the workplace. Much of the field-related background material has been mentioned in chapter one as part of the research context. The next section of this chapter will briefly outline some of the main case studies incorporating theory about variation in experiences. This literature was very useful both in helping me retain the individualism expressed by my participants, as well as acknowledging a significant amount of homogeneity in some areas.

[2] Unemployment as Varied Experience

In this section, I will only mention some of the studies involving variation which discussed individual differences similar to those evidenced in my own research. One of the earliest and most widely-cited study of downward status transition, (Wilensky 1959) found that the experience of downward mobility, rather than 'liberalizing' the individual, or making them more critical of the 'system,' tended instead to make people more conservative in regards to dominant values.

> The anomalous conservatism of the status-deprived can be understood with reference to early or *retrospective* socialization leading to denial of failure and individual striving. Like a man falling from a skyscraper, our skidder reaches not in the direction of his fall, but back up the structure. The values of the middle-class family or the white collar workgroup retain their force despite later status loss.
> (Wilensky 1959:228 [*emphasis mine*])

For the unemployed individual, looking back at the lost job situation must involve a bit of selective remembrance, or reconstruction of the past, which could mean strategically highlighting the positive or the negative. It is questionable then, whether increased middle-class unemployment will lead to more inter-class socialization and interaction, *or* to even stronger class distinctions and boundaries. The spectrum of possibilities then, goes in both directions all the way to the extremes, pointing to endless possibilities for variation. Leana and Feldman discuss the need for the unemployed individual to try to construct a new reality, to reconstruct a new self, but it is not apparent whether this will involve a reconstruction of perceptions of societal realities.

> People faced with the uncertainty caused by job loss need to construct a new version of reality or some explanation of the event. This sense-making reduces the uncertainty and provides meaning and structure to the unfamiliar event. Once this new reality is cognitively in place, the individual can act as if it were "objectively" true.
>
> (Leana and Feldman 1988:379-380)

These authors go on to observe that it is largely situational and contextual social elements that structure this process of "re-creation" of reality. Like Wilensky's observations, they reinforce the fact that social situations, socialization and 'retrospective socialization' are endlessly varied in content (content here as a resource in cognitive appraisal of self and society). We can then expect that these created and objectified realities will vary along a wide spectrum in relation to ideology, culture and construction of the self. The interesting question here is not so much why, as *how* this process of re-creation and objectification is accomplished with varying degrees of satisfaction, or possibly not accomplished at all.

One factor that has been associated with the relative ability to re-create a positive reality for the unemployed is that of class status. Little, (1976:272-273) in his study of middle-class unemployed, shows that a significant proportion of his participants viewed the job loss as positive, not negatively as most lower-class workers tended to. However, as Little explains that these middle-class people usually had more ancillary interests, hobbies, children etc., it becomes obvious that these specific personal characteristics are much more important than class membership per se, and these traits likely cross class boundaries as they are highly individualistic. Of course, any positive attitude toward job loss could only be maintained as long as basic financial needs could be met.

Recent research indicates the direct opposite results in comparing unemployment between members of different classes. There is strong evidence, for example, in Howe's (1990) book, that members of communities in which chronic unemployment is endemic, will experience less trauma upon unemployment, due to the fact that they remain part of a large and highly interactive group of unemployed people. In contrast, studies such as Newman (1989) and Burman (1988) show clearly the marked tendency for middle-class unemployed persons to actively withdraw from social contact in general. There are few middle-class households with enough savings put away in the 90s, that would allow them to view their joblessness as 'leisure.' Still, both the amount of savings and the level of ancillary interests remain highly important variables to examine, and these, along with others, are looked at more closely in several of the following chapters. Today's unemployed middle-class individuals are less likely to be able to re-create a positive objective reality, unless they use their unemployed time as an opportunity to successfully retrain in another occupational field. Again, situational contexts are always actively involved, and point to variation.

[3] Unemployment, Social-Psychological Effects and Variation

During the last thirty years or so, most research on the effects of unemployment has been conducted within the discipline of social psychology. One of the earlier book-length studies was by Tiffany, Cowan and Tiffany (1970), who, at that time, attempted a general social-psychological "portrait" of the unemployed. Their intention was to shift the focus of unemployment studies from the social and societal "environment" towards the individuals experiencing unemployment, and address some dominant assumptions about the unemployed in that time-period. Another key work is Hayes and Nutman, (1981) which examines some of the general psychological problems associated with the unemployed, and includes a description of job loss as a "psycho-social transition" (1981:9-19). This is useful in showing another perspective on the dynamics of transitions, which complements the anthropological concept of the liminal or 'in-between' stage of transitions in rites of passage. More recently, a study by Athens (1995) illustrates another related model of what she calls "dramatic self-transformations," (1995:571) in which she identifies five distinct stages in the process.

Kelvin and Jarret (1985) describe various stages of unemployment, again concentrating on social-psychological effects, individual self-conceptions and perceptions of what others thought of them. Gunderson, Meltz and Ostry (1987) give a valuable account of various aspects of unemployment experiences using international case study material. Kates, Grieff and Hagen, (1990) provide a good clinical psychological overview of the unemployed, using several case studies. Neil, Tykklainen and Bradbury (1992) examine coping strategies cross-culturally, specifically emphasizing the closure of mines in one-industry towns. Leana and Feldman (1992) deal specifically with strategies for coping with unemployment. They examine the various relevant contextual dynamics, from the individual, to organizations and communities.

This literature (particularly Leana and Feldman 1992) provides a good basis for understanding some of the main social-psychological effects and clinical pathologies associated with unemployment, and complements the main theoretical framework of this study. Articles about the unemployed, from a social-psychological perspective are extremely prolific, and the most helpful in this study were some of the more qualitative ones. [2] Some of this material contributed to my expectations as I began this study, especially in highlighting the need for caution and empathy in my interviewing. Most of these articles deal with pathological effects related to trauma, which I could expect to encounter in this research. Further, I draw on more recent material in this area and compare some of their findings with my own; this is presented later along with my data.[2] Likely the most valuable aspect of the information provided by social-psychological research relates to the incredible number of angles from which this research on the unemployed has been approached. The related variety in response and reactions to unemployment has been and continues to be shown by social psychologists. Another situational factor affecting experiences of unemployment is the use and effectiveness of informal social networks as resources.

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[2] Some of these include: Little (1976); Parnes and King (1977); Figuera-Mcdonough (1978); Cohn (1978); Weeks and Drengacz (1982); Cave (1983); Shamir (1986); Stevans, Register and Grimes (1987) and Leana and Feldman (1988). In 1988, the Journal of Social Issues devoted an entire volume (44, no.4) to the variety of social-psychological effects of unemployment, with eleven articles giving a cross-cultural perspective.

[2] There has been an increasing collaboration between disciplines so that social psychological theory and data is incorporated in the disciplines of social anthropology and sociology. This has greatly increased the breadth of research in these disciplines. This process may be initially attributed to the works of Erving Goffman (e.g. 1961;1963) and others following in this tradition. Some of this kind of (journal article length) research consulted here include Wood and Cohen (1977); Brockner and Carter (1985); Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt and O'Malley (1987); Athens (1995); Leana and Feldman (1995); Elias (1996) and de Vries and Balazs (1997). The journal *Human Relations* has been a long-time leader in multi-disciplinary research.

[3a]Social Networking and Variation

Lee (1985) sees many models of unemployment as failing to recognize the importance of extra-workplace relations as part of the variety central to the contextualization of experiences of unemployment.

> ...[these models] can be seen to assume a homogeneity of experience in redundancy and after. As a consequence, factors producing, for example, compositional effects in the population of redundants are often not spelt out. In addition, the model tends also to suggest that redundancy engenders only a limited range of outcomes with, typically, only a *simple opposition between employment and unemployment being posited.* Finally, the social structures, processes and relationships within which the redundant workers are embedded and which shape, for example, their job acquisition behaviour have no place in [these models].
>
> (Lee 1985:471)

According to Lee, the utilization of informal networks can modify some of the feelings of insecurity, and even those of anger and humiliation. He cites Goffman's work on the 'cooling off' process as one of the things that informal networks can provide.

> Goffman has pointed out that the employment of what he calls 'cooling out' mechanisms is a pervasive feature of social situations where an individual must be made to pass with at least some measure of good grace into a new but unwelcome status. Where this happens, 'structures of consolation' may be utilized in order to ease the transition into the new and unsought-for status. These include, according to Goffman: (a) the entrusting of disclosure concerning the new situation to some other thought capable of controlling resentment; (b) the provision of an alternative and/or compensatory status; (c) the maintenance of a fiction that the transition from a pre-existing role has been made willingly; and (d) the exchange of current status for compensation.
>
> (Lee 1985:475-476)

Recognizing informal networks in these ways provides insight into possible aspects of re-creation of a new objectifiable reality, but it also provides even more sources of variation in social context and processes. Social context and processes involving active individual choices have to be central in my study. Any single theoretical 'umbrella' would just provide restrictive constraints upon analysis, and lend to the kind of "homogenization" that Lee refers to.

It is important to recognize the possibilities inherent in informal relations, since they too create such a wide range of possible uses, both functional and dysfunctional in relation to the individuals' ability to reconstruct a not only objectifiable, but positively useful reality.[3] Radical and rapid societal flux and reorganization can potentially contribute to positive paradigm shifts at the individual level, essentially from bringing into attention formerly often invisible, assumed and not analytically or introspectively observable mainstream ideology, as Newman says.

> ... there are occasions when the contradictions come to the fore, becoming the explicit object of attention. Cataclysmic events that call for action and response bring cultural tensions into sharper focus. Crisis situations present stark contrasts for the participants, dilemmas that may be less overt in tranquil settings, but that are no less derivative from the mainstream cultural constructs that are the foundation for daily life.
>
> (Newman 1985:319)

In various ways all of the people who were interviewed for this study must be seen as being in some type of a social network crisis. The situation of becoming unemployed implies a social crisis as well. I had to consider this when conducting interviews, and it should also be kept in mind by the reader as an essential part of the contextualization of the quotations presented here. In relation to the importance of the specific workplace, these individuals very often consider themselves to have lost a 'home,' a 'purpose,' and a 'family,' in much more than purely symbolic terms, as Hochschild observes.

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[3] Much of the research on social networking is incorporated into broader studies of the workplace and unemployment. It is also seen in much of the work on gender and work/gender and unemployment. A few works consulted which deal specifically with network theory and case studies include [books] Ezorsky (1987); Gullestad (1984); Kelly and Clegg (1982; and Lin (1982), and articles by Cohen (1995); Morris and Irwin (1992) and Hurlbert (1991).

> ...Yet as broken homes become more common - and as the sense of belonging to a geographical community grows less and less secure in an age of mobility - the corporate world has created a sense of "neighbourhood," of "feminine culture," of family at work. ...Meanwhile, work time, with its ever longer hours, has become more hospitable to sociability - periods of talking with friends on E-mail, patching up quarrels, gossiping.
>
> (Hochschild 1997:55 -New York Times Apr.20)

In a related observation, Allcorn (1995:74) finds that a part of the social side of the workplace or organization includes active involvement with what he calls an "interactive social defence system." According to him, this system, which originates in organizational culture, serves as a psychological 'defence' both within and outside of the workplace.

> Organizational culture has at its core a confluence of individual unconscious psychological defences that form an interactive social defence system that defends members and groups from anxiety arising from the organizational life and threatening elements in the immediate environment and society.
>
> (Allcorn 1995:74)

It is obvious that lack of economic stability and the consequent need to restructure, in a period of rapid socioeconomic change, is a difficult period of time for employers, employees and particularly the unemployed. People, in whatever economic role, have to try to summon their available resources, deal with an element of uncertainty about the future, and perhaps reorganize or restructure their own ideas about self and society. What is very significant for the purposes of this study, is that many of the individuals' sources of social strength and support seem to lie more within the workplace environment than in the household. One of the most important sources of variation in experiences of work and unemployment is that of gender-differentiation. Some of the more significant observations made by my participants involving the gendered workplace are discussed at length in chapter six.

[4] Gender and Varied Experiences

The relationship between gender and unemployment has not been examined to any significant extent until relatively recently. As Leana and Feldman (1992:103) note, "Most studies of involuntary job loss have focussed exclusively on males. This focus is typically justified using common stereotypes about the importance of work for women." They go on to note that these stereotypes involve a few basic assumptions, as well as realities, about women and work. For example, they mention (1992:103-104) that women are often assumed to adjust more easily to job loss because work is "seen as less central to women's identities than it is to men's." This is partly due to the further assumption that the role of the housewife and associated 'non-wage' work is still seen as central to women's identities more than is wage-labour. These two assumptions are reinforced by an objective factor in the workplace - that women are "disproportionately represented at the bottom of authority, reward and status hierarchies at work" (Leana and Feldman 1992:104). Therefore, job loss among women is trivialized on the grounds that they hold less 'important' positions, and thus suffer less 'important' loss. As Leana and Feldman (1992:104) state, however, there are several reasons why job loss among women is in general every bit as potentially devastating as it is among men.

> ... these traditional assumptions and stereotypes do not accurately represent many working women - those who are primary wage earners, those who are the sole support for dependent children, those who are recent entrants into non-traditional jobs, and those, for whatever reason, who value and enjoy their work. For these women job loss may be even more devastating than it is for their male counterparts, since women generally fare worse than men in terms of both their financial resources and their abilities to replace lost jobs. Moreover, many recent research studies have reported that unemployed women generally have a more difficult time obtaining satisfactory employment than their male counterparts, and that females, once laid off, are twice as likely as their male counterparts to be unemployed for longer than a year.

(Leana and Feldman 1992:104)

Gender-based stereotypes about 'male' and 'female' work, or the genderization of work itself, is both based upon and reflects dominant societal ideologies about sex-roles. Mass-mediated sex-role stereotyping creates assumptions such as those noted by Leana and Feldman, (1992:103-104) and also reflects observable gender bias in the workplace. Women are still perceived as being most 'suitable' within the household, and as holding the less socially valued work positions; they are in fact disproportionately represented in the lower status jobs.[4]

In the remainder of this section, I will outline some of the background material about gendered aspects of work and unemployment that I found particularly useful in this study. Collier and Yanagisako (1989:28) point out that feminist practice has contributed to theoretical points of view on systems of dominant ideology; points of view that are consistent with Bourdieu's emphasis on agency used throughout this study.

> Feminist practice also fosters a focus on actors - or, more accurately, actresses - because it requires that women be treated as social agents. ...feminist anthropologists soon found that [women] were largely absent from existing ethnographic literature or, if present, were portrayed as preoccupied with childcare and households.
>
> (Collier and Yanagisako 1989:28)

It is clear that the almost exclusive concentration on men in the studies of unemployment is part of a long-standing gender-bias *within social science*, and not just within societal

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[4] Among the participants in this study, all of the lower- paying and part-time jobs were held by women, although some of the higher paying professional positions were also held by a minority of women. It was also pointed out to me several times by women that the support and part-time positions were perceived by them as highly valuable personally, while this value was not seen as reciprocated by the people in higher paying/status positions. See chapter six for a more detailed discussion of these and other gender issues in the workplace.

value systems or cultural perceptions.[5] Even when occupational segmentation by gender is accounted for, some literature indicates that women are still being paid less for doing the same work as their male counterparts, (see Kemp and Beck 1986:325) and that women working full-time (not adjusted for specific occupation) earn 72% of the wages of their male counterparts (Lero and Johnson 1994:6). These considerations undoubtedly have ramifications leading towards gender-differentiation in attitudes towards work, job-satisfaction and reaction to unemployment situations.

The importance of feminist contributions, as Collier and Yanagisako (1989:29) show, lies within what they call "practice theory." Reinforced by feminist perspectives on the relationship between society and the individual, practice theory shows how this relationship is not only a dichotomous, but a highly reciprocal one.

> Feminist practice also leads us, like practice theory, to question the utility of breaking the system into paired analytical oppositions...in which one half of the pair is viewed as determining the other....feminist practice forces us to grapple with the central problem of how the system constructs actresses and actors and how these *agents realize and transform the system.*
>
> (Collier and Yanagisako 1989:29 [*emphasis mine*])

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[5] Some studies point out that ethnographic literature about unemployment has often incorporated, rather than actively questioned, the erroneous and misleading assumptions about the activity and value of women in relation to the workplace. Occupational segregation or segmentation; organizational elements of the labour force that cannot be ignored, are often due to the variable of gender, and this variable is empirically connected to social values originating outside the labour market, as Richer (1988:98) says. "Recent research on children's play reveals a very early pattern of gender differentiation. The mode is sex-segregated play practices, with boys engaging in physical, competitive and outdoor games, while girls tend towards non-physical and non-competitive activities in indoor settings. This is replicated in the labour market in the phenomenon of occupational segmentation. As I have commented earlier, what this evokes is a process of increasing vertical differentiation of the sexes, begun in childhood and maintained throughout the life cycle."

Incorporating gender differences and sex-role stereotyping, *along with the centrality of individual agency,* allows for a more informed discussion of individuality and variation in experiences. As Babb states, a recognition of gender differences is the only way that any pretension to holistic study can be validated in economic anthropology:[6]

> Gender has been recognized as a critical organizing principle and element of social differentiation by a number of socio-cultural anthropologists...there is abundant historical and empirical evidence of "the significance of gender as a category which has powerful analytical and explanatory value in the study of social, political and economic processes." ... Even so, this fundamental understanding is slow to gain hold in the academic mainstream. Harris and Young (1981:117-118) attribute this to theorist's persistent use of the concept of the individual agent which "although supposedly neutral, is almost always conceived as male."
>
> (Babb 1990:279)

Burton (1987:424-425) shows that even the structures of employing organizations are built around gender-based value inequalities.[7] The other side of this organizational structuring based around male dependence upon domestic support, furthers the argument that it is the social nature of male-female relationships that needs to be re-assessed. As Barrett and McIntosh (1980:59) show, most workplace structuring is based on an assumption of what has been called the 'family wage' structuring. This not only includes the notion of the male as dependent upon 'domestic support,' but implicitly puts the female in a position of dependence on the male for wage or support from outside the domestic sphere.[8]

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[6] Davies (1990:391) shows how serious a lack of gender awareness can be in studies of employment and unemployment, in that women can be either excluded, or if looked at, only in terms of basic gender stereotypes that are not applied to the 'neutral' male. As he says, "Gender bias has been a recurrent problem in the social sciences. In the sociological study of work this bias can occur in at least two forms. First, women can be inadvertently excluded from study altogether.... this can be a startling omission considering it translates into 42.6% of the total paid labour force not being included, and ignoring domestic labour - possibly one-third of all productive economic activity. Secondly, gender can be omitted as a relevant variable from analysis of all-male settings. Frequently a population of men is portrayed to behave in ways that are 'gender-neutral,' such that a 'job model' which focuses on work conditions as primary determinants of job-related attitudes and behaviours is applied, while contrastingly, female workers are analysed within a 'gender model' which interprets job-related attitudes and behaviours as a function of gender role socialization and their home and family situations."

[7] It is not only the gender differentiations that must be examined in relation to work practices and organizational practices and frameworks, but the more *social* aspect of gender *relations* between men and women. This is necessary because organizational forms in the workplace have been and continue to be formulated around 'traditional relations.' As Burton puts it, (1987:425) ."... we need to cast our investigative net to the structural arrangements which, if left intact, will continue to operate to the disadvantage of women in paid employment and which will be activated to re-create women's subordinate status."

Studies also indicate that how and where people look for support during unemployment crisis is itself gender-differentiated. This suggests that men and women go through different kinds of processes to reformulate an objective and satisfactory reality. Barrett and McIntosh (1980) found that it was predominantly unemployed males who appear to be isolated, housebound and dependent upon female partners.[9]

As change occurs at the macroscopic socioeconomic level, strong gender association built into ideologies, organizational structures, merit systems and so forth are at least a significant limiting factor in both ideological and structural change at the individual and household level. They should be seen as contributing to the way value systems seem to 'lag behind' societal change, as was mentioned earlier.[10] Within all of the constraints discussed in this and the above sections, it is individuality which remains central, even if it is an individuality that cannot really be gender neutral, as Ashton and Sung observe.

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[8] Barret and McIntosh (1980:60) point out that this position of subordination, built into the system, is inextricably linked to 'traditional ideology.' "A number of feminist arguments can be raised against a wage structure predicated upon the dependence of a married woman on her husband. There is no shortage of evidence to support the suggestion that financial dependence carries in its train a significant degree of ideological subordination....Indeed the assumption of a male family wage affects all women's wages adversely, since even single women suffer from the lower rates of pay, poorer working conditions and constraints on promotion generally applied to women wage workers." A few other key articles elaborate on this theme, including (Cornfield, Cavalcanti Filho and Chun 1990; Loscocco 1990; King 1989; Peterson 1989; Neil and Snizek 1988; Downey and Moen 1987; Connidis 1986). A study by Harris and Bradcock (1988) confirms both that there are gender differences in stress due to job loss, in use and availability of informal support networks, and in attachment to jobs.

[9] The following more recent articles about gendered aspects of work and unemployment, were useful in the contextualization of the written presentation of this study, and should be listed here. Aryee and Luk (1996); Cook and Beaujot (1996); Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996); Greenstein (1996); Hollway and Jefferson (1996);Madigan and Munro (1996); Ashforth and Humphrey (1996); Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995); Javidan, Bemmels, Stratton Devine and Dastmalchian (1995); Wright, Baxter and Birkelund (1995), and Gherardi (1994).

> Indeed, the fact that the variables operate in a different way within each of the segments is itself powerful evidence for the existence of a segmented labour market, with sex, social class, locality and previous job experience all being important influences on the direction of job transitions.... In fact, even within segmented labour market, individual variables remain significant, indicating that employers continue to utilize the signals they provide...
>
> (Ashton and Sung 1992:18)

[5] Chapter Summary

It becomes obvious that experiences within the workplace are in complex relationship with "lifestyles and patterns of association, socio-political orientations and modes of action," and contribute to what Harris and Morris (1986:88) call "consciousness and action" in general. It follows that a study of unemployment must recognize this complex relationship. In these first two chapters I have provided the theoretical and situational contexts for the analysis of this relationship.[11]

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[10] As Morris (1987:103 puts it, "The economic structure has been presented as the basis for the development of a sexual segregation of roles, and an associated supported ideology, but changes in that structure are argued to have met with resistance to adaptation in gender roles which derives in part from this ideological base. The mobilization of informal resources has been presented as serving largely to shore up old traditional patterns. This, however, is simply to argue that under threat, people act defensively and look back to established modes of behaviour." (see also Kelly 1992)

[11] Some other relevant theoretical material concentrating on gender in the context of this study, is outlined in the first section of chapter six, in which I examine gendered workplace relations and other issues specifically

A review of the literature on unemployment is overwhelming, both in quantity and scope. The researcher has much to choose from, but fortunately the choice is not an arbitrary one. The participants and the interview data shape and sometimes dictate the choice. My data indicates that some perceptions are more helpful than others for purposes of analysis and clarification. These concepts, in turn, will be classified and modified by the data. Concepts like stigma, marginality, liminality, habitus and agency remain relevant; indeed they are central to the analysis. Within these conceptual frameworks it is possible to acknowledge experiential variation, individuality and individual agency while identifying patterns and generalizations.

The main theoretical approach taken from the above discussion has to do with the relationship between the ethnographer and the participants. My approach in this study is definitely one of 'dialogic ethnography,' in that I engage in lengthy conversations with my participants so that they are not strictly constrained by pointed questions, or any 'survey-style' interviewing. My purpose in this approach was to learn as much from the participants about what is especially important *to them*, and follow this up with theoretical framing.

More to the point, I tried very hard to be a good *listener*, while directing these interview conversations as subtly as possible. I especially did not want to conclude an interview, leaving the participant with the impression that they had not been able to fully express everything about their experiences that was central to their understandings of their situation. The information in the following chapters then, comes from the participants far

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related to my interview data.

more than from my theoretical framing of their narrations. In some areas, the theoretical overview will seem to outweigh the interview data, but this occurs as infrequently as possible, and reflects my attempting to portray a framed understanding of aspects that were brought up only in passing by the participants. If these considerations were brought up only very briefly, but by almost all of the participants, I then use a more deductive approach in these sections, while the bulk of this presentation reflects my central narrative, dialogical and inductive approach. By my use of an inductive combined with a deductive approach related to theorizing, I am able to present these narratives in as full and rich a format as possible. With these central theoretical intentions in mind, the following chapter will describe my methodology in more depth, and provide additional biographical information about the people who chose to take part in this study.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODS

[1] Some Considerations of Methodological Theory: Consistency

This study is intended, in the broad sense, to provide theoretically framed narrative accounts of individual experiences of work and unemployment. Experience of any kind has to combine the objective and subjective, the micro and macroscopic, and this is what makes objective analysis difficult, as Elger (1986) noted. This is also why experience, as a narrative form, is often underestimated as contributing to a certain kind of information and knowledge of a subject, rather than an objectively dissectible 'whole.' At the same time, as Fiske (1990:97) notes, (and I have already mentioned), the ethnographic process has to take into account a multiplicity of overlapping contexts, which contribute to the shaping of individual expressions of experience. Concurrently, (following Bourdieu's [1977, 1984] emphasis on individual agency), the individual has to be recognized also as contributing to his or her own contextualized understandings. As Fiske says, individual agency has to be presented along with this multiplicity of framing contextualizations.

> The popular text is where the potential meanings, pleasures and politics of the industrial text are actualized, and it is only in their actualizations that we can identify them. This involves an ethnography of social agents which runs the risk, which we must guard against at all costs, of allowing itself to be incorporated into the ideology of individualism. The social agent is not the individual of individualism but a socially constructed site crossed by a number of intersecting and sometimes contradictory discourses that has been produced by his or her particular trajectory through social space over his or her lifetime. But though social agents must, because of the contradictory nature of social forces, negotiate actively their own trajectory and their meanings of social experience, they cannot produce the discursive resources nor the social structure within which experience occurs, and meanings are made: they cannot choose the socio-historical terrain which their trajectory traverses. They are agents, not subjects, because their

> activity is not confined to making do with the determinations provided (active, creative, and underestimated though this may be), but what they do with these determinations feeds back in however small a way into the structure that provides them.
>
> (Fiske 1990:97)

Fiske is expressing ideas that are very consistent with the theory inherent in the methodology used in this study. I do not follow what might be called the 'neo-Marxist' perspective generally presenting macroscopic societal forces as mostly constraining or oppressive in relation to the individual (although it may seem to be in some of the following pages). At the same time, my perspective neither asserts the individualism, nor the individual as 'autonomous' in relation to larger contextual forces that Fiske cautions against. Rather I try to develop a sort of balance between these two extremes, and this attempt at balance contributed to the kinds of theoretical perspectives chosen in this study. The methodology used here follows both an inductive and deductive approach, viewing the individual agent as able to creatively contribute to his or her subjective and objective contextual environment. Concurrently, perceptions of agents are seen to be unavoidably shaped and framed, rather than constrained and restricted in some oppressive sense, by socio-structural environments and situational contexts.

In the 'real world' of my participants, various influences, effects, choices and constraints at different levels operate concurrently. To some extent all analysis has to be an imposition, however necessary. The separation of influences, choices, contexts and situations is therefore an artificial strategy, justified by the extent to which it facilitates understanding. This method of presentation allows us to look at many conceptual levels and situational contexts. Although these cannot be claimed to be exhaustive, they deductively include the main contexts shown to be centrally relevant in previous studies of the experience of unemployment. In an inductive sense, contexts and perceptions that are centrally relevant to the participants in this project are also presented.

As Mills describes, like the ever-present constraints in relationships between individual agents and multiple contexts, the relationships between textual construction within multiple contexts also must involve constraining factors. There is a consistency that has to be striven for, involving the 'balance' which I alluded to, between the diachronic relationships involved in daily life, as in the production of textual presentations.

> ...we should not see constraints as simply the imposition of colonial ideology on texts, since Foucault states 'as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the one thing for which and by which there is struggle.' Thus, discourse becomes not simply a grouping of written texts within a particular discursive formation, but, at one and the same time, the site of struggles for meaning and the shaping of the future parameters of writing. Texts are produced in situations where there are numerous economic, social, political, historical, textual and personal forces at work which impinge on the writing process, but the constraints which I describe should be understood not to refer only to factors which limit discourse, but also to those which enable discourse to take place.
>
> (Mills 1990:129)

I wanted my participants to identify the contextual levels and situational contexts that were important to them. This means that the focus was on the interpretation and meaning-creation in diachronic relation to various contexts, a common objective of qualitative research.. Like Fiske, Vincent (1978), in a much earlier article, emphasizes the need for contextualization in what she calls "action theory."

The objective is not so much directed towards generalizations as towards experiential understandings. These can contribute to a richer understanding of the meaning of unemployment, as my participants were considered the primary 'authorities' on the issues.

Hopefully, what Simon and Goode (below) note as the crucial importance of "local detail and social interpretation" as applicable in other settings, is what lends the aspect of generalizability to the findings presented here.[1] As they say, in relation to the role of social anthropology in a multi disciplinary project.

> ... the most significant barrier came from the epistemological issues. The notion that the purpose of the scientific research is to produce generalizable conclusions arises from the myth of science as objective. The reason that experimental designs are held in such esteem is that presumably they remove the confounding effects of local details and the interpretation of specific individuals from the findings, making them widely applicable. The problem is that local detail and social interpretation can be crucial in a new setting.
>
> (Simon and Goode 1989:238)

In this study, following the general methodological consistency outlined above, local detail and interpretation are emphasized, but the rich theoretical and case study information mentioned in chapter two continues to be used as background and comparative reference material.

[2] Interviewing and the Ethnographer: Methodological Considerations

Since most of these interviews evoked stories, it has to be consistently recognized that these stories and personal understandings (like any interpretive understandings) are not objectively 'pure' in any sense. Both the understandings and stories were formulated or achieved in a social context; a context that varies considerably due to 'standard' factors such as gender, type of job, job satisfaction, family life, ethics or beliefs, constraints and many others; all of which are inextricably mingled within experiential, largely situational narrations.

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[1] Bourdieu (1993:35-36) had this to say regarding the importance of attempting to portray what is real to people, related to what perceived of by the social scientist as the 'general.' "The definition of the process of science as a dialogue between hypothesis and experience can, however, easily degenerate into the anthropomorphic image of an exchange in which the two partners take perfectly symmetrical and interchangeable roles. But it should not be forgotten that reality never has the initiative in this exchange, since it cannot reply unless it is questioned. Bachelard puts it this way when he postulated that "the epistemological vector...points from the

It is recognized here that the interviewer or ethnographer plays a significant part, whether in guiding the interviews (however passively), and especially as an audience, or creator of a forum for evoking a certain kind of narration. The interview process is another contextualized experiential situation, like the ones being narrated. As much as possible, I tried to maintain a reciprocal dialogue during the interview process, and keep it as unstructured and flexible as I could, mainly in the sense of listening to people narrate what seemed most important to them as individuals. As in any dialogue, there is always the possibility of misinterpretation by the researcher as well as on the part of the person being interviewed.

Rather than viewing subjectivity in the interview process as a limitation, I try to respect it as a natural element of shared human understanding. Further, as Moerman points out, the anthropologist or interviewer, and the 'native' or interviewee, have this subjectivity in common, and both can only do their best to make sense of a situation:

> Searching my knowledge (and what more can any ethnographer or any native ever do to make sense of something?) for the structure specifically invoked in making actual situated talk meaningful for its talkers reverses the ethnographer's usual practice of selecting bits of the native world as illustrations for existing theories."
> (Moerman 1988:5)

In the modernist and 'postmodernist' discussions about anthropological epistemology in general, there lies a subtle tone implying that anthropological 'realities' can only be such if an endless variety of conditions are met. Often, innumerable elements of the ethnographic

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rational to the real and not, as all philosophers from Aristotle to Bacon professed, from the real to the general."

process are pointed out as having possible effects on the data (for examples, see Marcus and Fischer 1986; Clifford 1986; Crapanzano 1986; Rosaldo 1986, and the particularly insightful monograph by Rosenau 1992). The researcher must be very sensitive to the intricacies of ethnographic process, but there is a danger in trying to objectify ethnography and somehow elevate it as being 'above' the processes of human dialogue that go on everyday in every society.[2] Geertz cautions against becoming overly preoccupied with presentation of 'indisputable reality,' when it involves the implication that there in fact exists some human understanding that is free of any subjectivity.

> A number of unfortunate results have arisen from this burial of the question of how ethnographic texts are "authorized" beneath anxieties (to my mind, rather exaggerated anxieties) about subjectivity. Among them is an empiricism extreme even for the social sciences.....
>
> (Geertz 1988:9)

I adopt a related methodological position that the interview process is in general not very different from many other contexts in which individuals in western society participate regularly. There is, for example, an inequity having to do with power in dialogue whenever a person is speaking to their boss, whenever a tape-recorder is running or an individual is taking notes, in numerous varieties of patron-client discourse, and so forth. This inequity in power can shape, constrain or contextualize the nature of dialogue to any degree, or have little effect at all. There is no reason to assume that the context of being interviewed by an ethnographer is any more unusual than other contexts that individuals encounter in daily life. As Clifford points out, the ethnographic process is somewhat analogous to language in general; never absolutist in depiction, never free of subjectivity:

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[2] For a good critical discussion of postmodernist anthropological highlighting of possible and elusive complexities that arise in ethnographic processes, see Sangren (1988), who says (1988:405-406) "Like many of my colleagues, I am simultaneous intrigued and appalled by the combination of insight and hubris that characterizes this making of anthropology itself an object or "other" for study. This endeavour raises intriguing issues; among them one of the most important is the notion that the "reflexive turning of the anthropological gaze towards anthropology itself subverts the discipline's objectifying authority. However, in my view the terms in which this reflexivity has been framed are ultimately misleading and surprisingly "unreflexive" in ways that diminish both the legitimacy and the logic of the arguments it produces."

> The words of ethnographic writing, then, cannot be construed as monological, as the authoritative statement about, or interpretation of, an abstracted, textualized reality. The language of ethnography is shot through with other subjectives and specific contextual overtones, for all language, in Bahktin's view, is "a concrete heteroglot conception of the world."
>
> (Clifford 1988:42)

The responses by participants in this study, including the context in which they were made, and the way that they are presented here, all have to be seen as being 'shot through with other subjectives and specific contextual overtones,' since that is the nature of all human discourse, and especially of any presentation. Realization of this fact does not detract from the relevance of ethnographic practice, or the meaningfulness of ethnographic writing. As Hammersley points out, all human beliefs and actions are constructions, and this has to include the accounts of anthropologists (1992:53). Every act of communication involves feedback necessary in assessing other people, the situation and the self, as Goffman has observed.

> Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a line- that is, a pattern of verbal and non-verbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, *especially himself.*
>
> (Goffman 1967:5 [*emphasis mine*])

Recognizing these constraints is thus a positive and basic necessity for asserting that meaning can be conveyed in the interviewer/interviewed setting. Simultaneously, it has to be recognized as constrained and incomplete meaning. A claim to comprehensive holism or objectivity here is not necessary. Such a claim would actually be 'non-social,' either naive or egocentric, and ultimately unjustifiable. The recognition of constraints as essential to understandings is at the heart of any positive modern anthropological critique.

> ...the aim of anthropology is the enlargement of the universe of human discourse. That is not, of course, its only aim - instruction, amusement, practical counsel, moral advance, and the discovery of natural order in human behaviour are others; nor is anthropology the only discipline which pursues it. But it is an aim to which a semiotic concept of culture is particularly well adapted. As interworked systems of construable signs (what, ignoring provincial usages, I would call symbols), culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviours, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a *context*, something within which they can be intelligibly - that is, thickly - described.
>
> (Geertz 1973:14 [*emphasis mine*])

The universal human need to be socially accepted and have the feeling, at least, that we are understood by significant others, requires constant feedback. All of us continually operate in a reflexive mode. Ethnographic methodology, perhaps especially that of interviewing, or elicited conversation, has to operate within the same reflexive conditions which produce cultural, individual and societal knowledge of any kind. In order to be human, we must also be socialized, and continue to be socialized through experience and feedback.

> Reflexive, as we use it, describes the capacity of any system of *signification* to make itself its own object by referring to *itself:* subject and object fuse....Within the self, detachment occurs between self and experience, self and other, witness and actor, hero and hero's story. We become at once both subject and object. Reflexive knowledge, then, contains not only messages, but also information as to how it came into being, the process by which it was obtained.
>
> (Myerhoff and Ruby 1982:2)

My role in this study was to *participate* in discussions rather than just eliciting data, and my participatory role is considered as much a part of the data as responses of the people being interviewed. That is why this study lent itself to long-term, in-depth discussions with a few individuals, in a combined deductive and inductive approach. It was participatory in that I had access to some contextual material that many of the people being interviewed did not. At the same time, each participant had access to their own contextual information that I initially lacked. As they told stories of their experiences, I tried to introduce relevant aspects of context and anthropological theory. In this kind of interviewing then, both parties are looking for feedback and open to reassessment, and greater understanding.

[3] Outline of Specific Methodology

Before beginning any interviewing, I spent two years reviewing the case studies and theoretical perspectives which had already been applied in the context of work and unemployment; much of this was multi disciplinary research, as shown in chapter two. I then selected an organization appropriate for a case study. I conducted relatively long interviews with people who were, or had been members of this organization, or who worked in similar fields. My objective was to elicit narrations of experiential understandings and interpretations, rather than more limited data collection with a larger research population.

Although my 'research' population was relatively small, the length of each interview, along with the extensive reinterviewing, and the stages in which my research was conducted (described below) meant that I gathered a wealth of data from many different angles and perspectives. The interviews that I conducted were between 1 1/2 to 3 hours long, and allowed the participants to express themselves in as much depth and detail as they wished.

I would have liked to do more participant observation within the workplace, but this was not very feasible, since it was practically deserted. Similarly, I would have liked to see more of the participant's homes and make certain observations about standards of living and consumption patterns and so forth. However, I conducted all of these interviews at each individual's place of choice. Some chose to be interviewed in their homes, and many in an office allocated to me by the executive director for that purpose. All of the single women were interviewed in an office in their former workplace, excepting one in her home, and one in another workplace. By sacrificing the observatory information that I might have been able to collect in homes, to conducting interviews in places chosen by the individuals, I believe that I demonstrated respect for their choice.

These interviews were all taped and later transcribed by myself. Transcribing the interviews myself allowed me a 'second hearing' of the dialogue. This was very important, in relation to the developmental process in the construction of the interview data, as I will explain. [3]

[3a] The First Stage

The main cuts by the Klein administration in Alberta were announced in early 1994, as I describe in chapter one. Since it took some time for these drastic cutbacks to be implemented, and to take direct effect at the individual level, I waited until October 1994 to conduct my first set of interviews. I began by interviewing one severely underemployed person several times, in order to become more familiar with the process. This was especially important since I knew that many of the participants would be traumatized by their experience and sensitive to certain areas of discussion.

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[3] I consulted many good books written on specific ethnomethodological procedures, and took several courses using some of these books, which are not cited in the body of text here, but should be acknowledged. Some of the ones that I found to be the most helpful include Wax (1971); Hammersley and Atkinson (1983); Ellen (1984); Clifford and Marcus (1986); van Willigen (1986); Babbie (1989 5th. ed.). Later methodological advice in framing and writing were taken from those previously mentioned here, along with Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1991); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) and Bourdieu (1993).

[3b] The Second Stage

Later in October, I interviewed ten people, almost all of them from the specifically chosen workplace. Of these ten, five were women and five were males. Of these, one male and one female were severely underemployed. Both had been working in their chosen and trained-for professions for over 3 years, experienced a period of prolonged unemployment, and subsequently taken jobs that were not even marginally close occupationally or financially to their previous occupations. Both of them held bachelors degrees and both had become unemployed due to provincial cutbacks resulting in private sector downsizing. I conducted two interviews with each of these people, a few days apart, and each lasting between 1 1/2 to 3 hours.

The other eight participants consisted of one male former executive in the public service sector who had already been unemployed for ten months, due to earlier provincial cuts. He had been working in the same workplace for almost 14 years, and worked his way up to executive director. The remaining seven people had all been dislocated from the same professional workplace, also in the public sector area affected by the cuts. Two of them were male land-use planners who had worked in this occupation, and the same workplace for over 21 years each. One was a male former accountant in this same workplace, who had left that position about three years ago, subsequently retrained as a teacher, could not find employment in that area, and had begun his own business with all of the capital he could procure. This business was eventually declared bankrupt, and when I interviewed him, he was retraining again in another professional occupational area. The remaining four people consisted of a female part-time secretary who had worked 13 years in this workplace, and was raising three young children. Another was a female planning assistant who had worked about 5 1/2 years in the field, two of those in this workplace. A third was a female who had worked in this office for 13 years in various capacities, including public relations, resource librarian and production of the office newsletter for the public. The last of these initial people was a female draftsperson who had worked 8 years in this office doing drafting work related to land-use planning.

[3c] The Third Stage

After completing these initial interviews, which represented narratives from a wide diversity of individuals, situations and specific occupations, I transcribed all of the interview data. I was getting a perspective on the occupational and social dynamics of a specific middle-class professional workplace, which was heavily affected by downsizing. This also included an awareness of the importance to these people of the specific occupational context of land-use planning, which was also almost decimated in Alberta (see chapter one). In consultation with my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Jean DeBernardi, we decided that I should take advantage of the larger research potential of this organization in transition. I had already discovered elements of dynamic interactivity that I had not anticipated. We agreed that I should try to interview some of the people who still remained employed in this specific office, to get their perspectives as well (there were not many left by this time).

My participants had given much useful data in relation to my knowledge of existing unemployment research. However, they had also talked much more in depth about the importance of both the specific workplace, and their specific occupational development than I had expected. I had to spend some time reformulating my ideas about what was important to these people, so that I could take these things into consideration for the next stage of interviewing. It was obvious that this loosely structured interviewing was very much a combination of the deductive and inductive, and a highly dynamic reflexive and developmental process.

[3d] The Fourth Stage

I decided that I should not interview unemployed people during the Christmas holiday period, in consideration of their feeling when under such high levels of stress. In January of 1995, about 3 months after my first interviewing, I interviewed eight new participants, and conducted follow up interviews with three participants from the first session. Of the eight new participants, 5 were female and 3 male. Seven of these people were from the same previously mentioned workplace. The eighth was a female who had previously worked as a senior planner in management, so she was in the same occupational field, but in a different workplace, also hit quite hard by the cutbacks.

Of the seven people from the workplace on which I was now concentrating, one male planner had been laid off after working there for 17 years. One was a highly educated female who used to work there as a design planner. Another was a male former senior planner in management from that office who had worked there for about 25 years, and had recently taken early retirement. The remaining people from this now centrally emphasized office were still employed there, as what are commonly called 'survivors.' One of them was a female planning assistant/technician/librarian who now, due to the cuts, worked there on a one-year contract basis with no benefits. Another was a female subdivision assistant who still worked there but had taken on many additional duties (as most of the others also had). In order to get a perspective, in the context of the cuts, and effects to the workplace, I also interviewed one of only two 'surviving' planners, who had both achieved the rank of senior planner. Lastly, I conducted interviews with the executive director of the workplace. With five of these eight people, I conducted two interviews each, both lasting between 1 1/2 and 3 hours, so that this data was much more extensive than that of the first interviewing. It included a stronger focus on occupational and workplace considerations, along with the same kind of deductive questioning that went into the first set of interviews.

During this session, I also conducted follow-up interviews with three of the participants whom I had interviewed in the first session. I chose these people for two reasons; the first was to try to get additional information relating to the increased focus on specific workplace and occupational dynamics. The second reason for choosing these people was their unique circumstances. One individual had become re-employed in the same occupational field in another city. Another person was still unemployed, and had been for the longest period (well over a year) of any of my participants. The third person selected had recently used up her severance package, and had to go to 55% of her accustomed monthly wages using UIC, and I had calculated during my transcription that she would not be able to live on that given her monthly expenses (in that case I was proven wrong).

[3e] The Fifth Stage

I spent about two weeks after this last session of interviewing to formulate more specific themes to look for, given the increasingly specific information that I had been receiving, and then I did a series of reinterviewing again. I re-interviewed eight people (four male and four female), both working and non-working, which was a deliberate choice on my part, since the narrations of working individuals were proving to be very interesting and complementary to the experiences described by the unemployed participants. This finished my interviewing for this study. After further transcribing, I turned my attention directly to the narrations themselves, carefully considering theoretical perspectives and concepts that could frame the data in ways that I sensed would reflect the perspectives of my participants.

I spent a year mainly teaching in the period between the final transcription and the writing of this project. I taught in several related areas, and had time to think over various ways in which I could theoretically frame the part of the collected material, in this way, largely (but of course not wholly) inductively. In the process of the theoretical framing and the writing-up of this project, I arranged to be in very close contact with an individual who had worked for a long time in the centrally-emphasized workplace. This individual was consulted mainly as to whether or not my theoretical framing was appropriate to his perception of the collective experiential interpretations of people in that workplace.

[4] Chapter Summary

The methodology used in this study is very much linked to the theoretical approach described in chapter two. Again, since the central approach was intended to follow the format of dialogical ethnography, the methodology had to reflect this in letting individual participants have the fullest possible time and opportunity to express themselves, so that I could learn the main things that were centrally salient to them, and their own experiential framing of understanding. This meant that the interviewing had to be directed as subtly as possible, so that participants would not lose track of their own narrative directions. At the same time, whenever an interviewee, of their own volition, came up with an expression that struck me as especially representative of the main theoretical concepts I had intended to use in this study, I encouraged them to elaborate. This kind of direction of interviews allowed a richer understanding of personal articulations of well-established anthropological theory.

The methodology used here did produce a very rich narrative base, but it also required that I conducted very lengthy interviews, and many multiple interviews. In some cases, the participant asked to be able to think further on the subjects, and express a more considered opinion on certain things brought up in the first interview. As well, my personal transcription of the interviews was necessary in order for me to know in great detail what had been expressed by each person. The rather lengthy period between my finishing the transcriptions and beginning to use the data in written form was also necessary, since I had to find ways in which to theoretically frame a great deal of experiential narration that could not be adequately addressed by only the theoretical base concepts I was prepared to use upon beginning the interviewing.

If I had not spent this period in thinking about various theoretical possibilities, and discussing them with my 'guide' from the organization, and with my supervisor, much of the data collected would have had to have been arbitrarily omitted, or inappropriately theorized. In any of these scenarios, the richness of the data would have been lost.

In the following chapters, I integrate this rich data with the most appropriate theoretical frameworks that I could find, contributing to my, (and hopefully the reader's) understanding of these experiential narrations. At least as important here is that the theoretical perspectives chosen were thought to be appropriate and useful by the person from the workplace with whom I consulted, as well as by participants during interviewing. In the next chapter, the development of a very highly personalized, meaningful workplace context is described.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES: INTEGRATION OF THE SYMBOLICALLY-CHARGED OCCUPATION AND SELF IN THE RITUALIZED WORKPLACE

In this chapter I provide an historical basis for the discussion of the specific workplace as a collective habitus. There are three main objectives in this chapter, all revolving around the importance processes of self-development. First, I will show why a post-secondary educational process is particularly important, when it is coupled with the individual's personal interests. This process is directed towards achieving the necessary prerequisites for employment in an occupationally-specific workplace, where the person's interests, skills and values become socially objectified; for example, through application and mutual recognition. This is an integral part of an individual's self-identification, and means that only persons with similar occupationally-related education and socialization can be fully incorporated into the specific occupational workplace. The incorporation of individuals with similarly developed values, expectations and competence is essential for the workplace to be viewed as a collective habitus, as discussed further in chapter five.

Second, I introduce the importance of examining the dynamic and dialectical nature of the relationship between similarly educated agents and the workplace environment. Here, as in the rest of this chapter, workplace structure and occupational parameters are not viewed mainly as constraining, but as contextual framework which contributes to the creation of individual and intelligibly shared symbolic meanings.

Continuing with the theme of workplace structure as essential to meaning-creation processes, in the third section of this chapter I show that the ability to continue self- and field-related development continues to be a main value *after* entrance to a particular workplace[3]. These observations are integrated with theoretical concepts of ritualized, symbolic meaning, as it directly relates to the need for contextualizing structure. In this section, the interview data illustrates the creative potential of individuals, within the framework of what we may think of as a highly constraining environment.

[1] Development of Interests and Values: Complementary Individual Histories

The process of developing specific occupational competence is essential for understanding the workplace as a collective habitus As Bourdieu says, all human interaction is shaped by "systems of dispositions, embodied in an historically-developed competence." According to Bourdieu, individual dispositions are objectively realized, or "embodied" precisely because they are structured.

> Every confrontation between agents in fact brings together, in an interaction defined by the objective structure of the relation between the groups that they belong to... and, through these habitus, all the objective structures of which they are the product, structures which are active only when *embodied* in a competence acquired in the course of a particular history...
>
> (Bourdieu 1977:81)

The collective habitus then cannot constitute 'temporally-isolated' interaction, since all activity, practice and each individual self, are objectively realized through structured historical development. The following person, who had worked for over two decades in the same workplace, shows how development of occupational competence was motivated by individual interest, personal valuing of the main themes of the specific field, and specific direction towards a rewarding career.

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[3] Smucker (1994:40) makes a good point when he notes that the Canadian and American government, and a considerable number of researchers on unemployment, still have the attitude that the unemployed 'don't want to work.' They do not take into account the kinds of extensive development of personal interests and the self-investments and identifications that take place in the workplace environment revolving around the occupational field. As Smucker says, "Market-oriented economic models add to this [negative assessment of the meaning of unemployment] imagery by assuming that individuals act on the basis of rational self-interest with no regard for the society at large. They assume that if incentives are not adequate, individuals will fail to maintain their commitment to employment."

> P. Back in the late '60s, 'till 1971, I went to university, 'cause I was kind of interested in this. I took 3 years out of my life I spent a lot of money, going there...
> R. Specifically training...
> P. Well, the bloody government at that time was waving the golden carrot in front of everyone, saying there's a career in Planning for you - the Planning Act was a pretty good piece of legislation - seemed to have a lot of teeth to it, seemed to work, and they're waving this thing.

Individuals often put much more into field-related education than the minimum training needed to get into the particular field. The personal identification with a specific field was begun through interest, long before entering the workplace in most cases, as this individual describes. Personal identification with a field, then, is not something which is 'given' to an individual through socialization processes within the workplace. It has been developed over a long period of time, usually through highly structured socialization in post-secondary education. This structure, while constraining in one sense, also provides necessary context for the development of personal interest.

> P. When I started college, ah, my wife worked part-time, most of the time I worked part-time as a student, driving bus for handicapped people, so you could do it right on campus, or for day-care. My wife worked as a (life)guard at the pools, the city pools and I did at the YMCA at their pool on weekends. And that was to get more recreation background and apply it to my schooling - anything with day-care, disabled, working with children - all those things came up, and I knew they would in the field.

The following person had worked in many professional capacities, and discusses the intensive educational preparation, willingly undertaken, in order to enter what is seen as a promising new profession. This person had many professional interests, had extensively trained for accounting and worked in that area, then obtained an education degree. This person found limited workplace opportunities in education, so was now training in another occupational field, which is referred to below as another "investment."

> P. So, I've gone now and I've passed, for both Alberta and B.C., all the accident and sickness exams, the general life insurance exams, and then I start studying I hope next week to be able to get my mutual fund license - so it's going to take me about another 3-6 months of investment of time; in the meantime I can make a few little bits of sales - ah, I'm able to collect a bit of UIC for a few months and I've got 6 months to try and make a business go. Only I'm going to do it the difficult way, not being a guy who likes to do it the easy way - I noticed right off the bat that the interior of B.C. doesn't have anybody from this company - no reps in that area. I think I can go in and establish myself, and probably recruit half a dozen or a dozen people and build a solid little business.

As Bourdieu makes very clear, this kind of investment in specific advanced education always reflects personal value and interest choices. Further, the parameters of the field are very specific, and therefore must contribute to the further specialization, and distinctiveness of the individual's field-related self.'

> A field, even the scientific field - defines itself by (among other things) defining specific stakes and interests, which are irreducible to the stakes and interests specific to other fields (you can't make a philosopher compete for the prizes that interest a geographer) and which are not perceived by someone who has not been shaped to enter that field (every category of interests implies indifference to other interests, other investments, which are therefore bound to be perceived as absurd, irrational, or sublime and disinterested). In order for a field to function, there have to be stakes and people prepared to play the game, endowed with the *habitus* that implies knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the field, the stakes, and so on.
>
> (Bourdieu 1993:72)

Bourdieu shows that fields are closely related to the individual habitus, since, as he puts it, the field has the ability to "define itself," as well as contributing to self-definitions. The occupationally-specific educational process is then also a self-development process, and it contributes to a specialized group of individual agents who can practice effectively within a specialized field upon entering the (also specialized) workplace. As Bourdieu puts it, these specialized workplace entrants, because of their directed historical development, unite the field-specific past, present and future in the 'game' of workplace practice.

> Through the tacit understanding of the principles of the game that is required of new entrants, the whole history of the game, the whole past of the game, is present in each act of the game.
>
> (Bourdieu 1993:74)

The workplace, then, combines homogeneity of historically-developed interests with individual diversity, within specific occupational parameters. This gives the collective workplace habitus its simultaneously individually dynamic as well as mutually intelligible characteristics. Practice in the workplace not only acts to 'unite' people with similar interests and training. Through a reflexive dynamism, workplace agency and practice continually reproduces and maintains these interests; becoming the setting of the continuation of the field itself. The workplace is the locus for an occupationally-specific high level of mutual comprehensibility, and this reciprocal understanding of the interests and abilities of workplace members is what makes this an unique setting for objectification, through appreciation and recognition.

The workplace which revolves around such a specific field, cannot be understood as temporally 'capturable.' As Bourdieu points out, through practice combined with shared and similarly developed general knowledge, it represents a certain kind of intelligibly framed meshing of the past, present and future, and should be understood that way. This person, in a senior management position, shows a related understanding in saying that a certain degree of shared knowledge is necessary in order to make a significant contribution in any field, and this knowledge is transformed into collective contribution through any *occupationally-specific practice*.

> P. No matter what you're doing, if it's carpentry, if it's medicine, if it's planning, it all 'looks' for the same things that the people bring to a job. You have the skills that you come with, but when you actually get on the job, everyone is looking for the same thing. Everyone is looking for a genuine contribution, nobody is trying to assert themselves through what they know or think they know. You don't want to be slovenly, you don't want to leave the job half-done.

It is obvious that a great deal of highly structured field-related knowledge is required for entrance into the professional workplace. The educational process structures and develops interests, and directs them towards the specific occupation. The resulting partial homogeneity of interests, occupational structure, and specialized knowledge and practice, contributes to the uniqueness of many professional workplace settings, in terms of the potential there for a certain kind of solidarity, much like the organic solidarity introduced by Durkheim (1933).

Durkheim (1933) was one of the first sociologists to examine the phenomenon of the division of labour and increased specialization. In a macroscopic, or societal sense, Durkheim (1933:353-) argued that the divisions of labour could produce anomic "pathological symptoms," largely through creating a segmented society in which people of differing segments would be alienated from each other. However, Durkheim also recognized the (related) fact that even within his hypothesis of societal anomie, at the level of distinct fields or professions, increased specialization can also create increased solidarity, "As organs are more rigorously solidary when functions are very divided..."

(Durkheim 1933:359). Of course, Durkheim also recognized individuality in this solidarity, as Kertzer observes in the context of ritual. Kertzer also points out the centrality of *practice*, or "acting together," in producing solidarity.

> The common reading of Durkheim, that he identified solidarity with value consensus in his interpretation of ritual, misses the strength of his argument. His genius lies in having recognized that ritual builds solidarity without requiring the sharing of beliefs. Solidarity is produced by people acting together, not by people thinking together.
>
> (Kertzer 1988:76)

The next person makes a crucial point, in observing that the developmental process does not end, but continues and even intensifies within the objectifying context of the specific workplace context. An ability to continue self- and field-related development within the workplace was highly valued by the people I interviewed.

> R. Were there certain things that you really liked about this job?
> P. A couple different ones - it was nice to take the things I'd learned in university and see them work in real life, that was neat, and it's such a good learning environment - I learned more here in the 5 1/2 years of practical knowledge than I did in university, for sure, um, it was nice to , it was sort of a feeling of 'being in the know?,' I don't know, 'cause it's a place where things are happening, they let me go to different towns and I liked the part of being here - the centre of action, it's kind of nice

As the creative potential of occupational and workplace structuring has already been introduced, it is necessary to contextualize this discussion with a brief summary of the need to consider workplace structure as much more than only constraining.

[1a] A Less Deterministic Conceptualization of Workplace Structure

My interviewees' comments about the seemingly unstructured and unproductive, even valueless time while unemployed as a main problem of unemployment was very consistent with the research of Burman (1988) and Newman (1989). However, when asked about what they had enjoyed the most about their former jobs, or what they *missed* the most about the jobs and workplace environment, *structured time was not the primary emphasis in this context, and neither was the work ethic ideology.* This does not mean that structured time at work was not valued, only that it was not expressed as a central value. In some cases, workplace time-structuring was even expressed as a central negative constraint. On the other hand, individually-controlled flexibility was often noted as a main positive aspect of the particular workplace (see further quotes below). Similarly, this person's comments are illustrative of most participants' consistently qualifying their perception of their personal relationship to the broad work ethic concept.

> P. There are lots of kinds of work that I can think of that there's no way I could do - I have to feel like I'm making a difference, I have to feel that I have, I mean control of some part of it, and that I get to influence what happens.

It became obvious that as a researcher, I could not work 'backwards,' to making the assumption that since 'A' is the primary problem of the state of unemployment, then 'A' should be one of the primary values of employment. This may work well logically, using the assumption that employment is antithetical to unemployment, but it does not seem to work according to the expressed perceptions of my group of participants. We have to look more closely at what things the structured workplace environment may provide, for the middle-class professional. These provisions may be strongly related to both structure and values, but likely not in such a straightforward way as could be assumed.

First, we must consistently acknowledge that the workplace does not simply 'provide' structure for participating individuals. The process of meaningful structure is much more complicated than this, and has to include both the 'imposed' parameters *and* the active individual participation in shaping workplace structure. That is why Bourdieu's concept of the habitus (1977:80) is particularly appropriate here, in helping explain the dialectical nature of the relationship between the individual agent and a meaningful environment. This person, who had worked in the same office for over a decade, gave a typical response when asked what she most valued at work. She mentioned the ability to learn on the job, and develop knowledge related to her own distinct interests within the field. This is definitely interpreted by this individual as a personal "gain."

> P. Probably the most enjoyable was the flexibility. I never had to stay in a certain area; they let me grow as much as I wanted to. If I was content staying in printing they would have let me stay full time. But I had other interests so they really catered to what I wanted to do , and they still do that, so that's probably my favourite thing. Just because you don't have a degree doesn't mean you can't learn what they're doing. That's probably the most [enjoyable part], it was never boring. I've worked in other places and this is by far the best place for me to work, I feel like this is where I gained the most, and enjoyed it the most...

In order to understand the importance of developmental processes before and after entering the specific workplace, it is necessary to recognize the importance of structured development in contributing to mutual intelligibility. It is also essential to acknowledge the 'room to manoeuvre' within formal structuring, so that it is not seen as only constraining in a deterministic sense.

In the next section I will elaborate upon the expressed central importance of the continuation of self- and field-related development *within* the workplace. I will also expand upon the confluence between homogeneity and individuality, in relation to occupational and workplace parameters, and the workplace as collective habitus.

[2] Continuing Structured Development: A Main Value in the Field-Specific Workplace

Foucault notes that even within what we might think of as "constricting systematic codal structures," practices occur which are practices of the self, and may constitute a form of moral reflection. The inherent value of these practices can have more to do with self-development than with 'imposed' structures or value systems.

> ... It may be that these practices of the self are associated with a lot of systematic, constricting codal structures. It may even be that they almost fade away in the face of this set of rules, which is then presented as the essence of morality. But it may also be that they constitute the most important and most active focus of morality and that it is around them that reflection develops. The practices of self take on the form of an art of self, relatively independent of moral legislation.
> (Foucault 1988:260)

Foucault is talking about codal structures at the societal level, but he is also making a crucial observation about ethnographic emphasis which can be applied here. Following Foucault' (1988:260) and Bourdieu's (1977:80) arguments, even if the systematically structured codal rules that might seem 'immutable' and constricting, are more readily apparent than the ability of the agent to influence these structures, it does not mean that the agent's influence is any less relevant or meaningful. Even within the framework of workplace structure, for example, the practices of self, like the educational development processes discussed in the above section, should also be considered as development of an "art of self", (Foucault 1988:260) never completely constrained by any structure or system. As this person notes, *individualistic*, rather than 'imposed' interpretations of moral issues can be even more constraining, in the sense of employment, than structures found within the parameters of the workplace or field.

> P. I could get a job; for example I was selling cars for Mazda out in B.C. for a while. And that was interesting, and I learned some stuff there for a few weeks -

but once I figured out - and we sat down one day at a sales meeting - and I really had my eyes opened, because I didn't want to see it, and then I realized what they were doing. I would come up with a sale on a car, if you can believe it, and it was a second-hand car, 5 or 10,000 dollars. And then what they would do is take the customer, and they would wring-'em out, I mean they would really wring every penny they could get out of them. I saw them take a customer of mine, an elderly couple, I'd sold them a four-wheel drive truck - they worked on them for over 2 hours, the sales manager and the business manager - what the business manager really was just a thief - he sat there on a computer and he was telling them he was trying to get them lower rates - but what he really sucked them into was a bunch of extra frills - these people are seniors, they're 70 years old, do you think they need life insurance? I mean, really.
R. They sold them that from a car dealership?
P. From a car dealership, "well, you know, if we're going to borrow this bit of money, shouldn't we have some life insurance on you for at least that value, and if anything happens to you, you're loan will be paid off." But I did the best I could, and then to see these people jerking around trying to take advantage of them like that. So I think there has to be a certain amount of morality in business, or in any job you do, so that's more my reward.
R. That's not really the work ethic, that's more having to do with ...
P. Living with yourself.

The recognition of individual agency, in part as the ability to conceptually 'manoeuvre' within, and even influence the parameters of the field, or the structures of the specific workplace, are consistent with Foucault's idea of the "art of self" being relatively independent. This relative independence is objectively realized, and expressed as a central value by many of my participants. It is most often expressed as the ability to continue self- and field-related development in the workplace, which is referred to as a form of 'freedom.' As Bourdieu notes, the positioning of the self within social space involves specific logical limitations, but also generates strategies, preferences, choices and so forth, which contribute to individual lifestyles. This person describes a developmental 'journey' which is full of ritualized passages through statuses and stages; a process of self-development linked to occupational development. If these structured occupational statuses were not recognizable, then these passages would have no meaning.

> P. I chose to go into recreation administration, and I took a 2 year diploma from the college - I got a job in the field even before I completed the course - one of the fortunate that did so, and had to do some evening work to finish my diploma, but I did. I started out in the field, in the programming level, where I was putting together programs and working with associations, whatnot, and finished when I was laid off, as a recreation director.

According to Bourdieu, it is these common structural constraints which, by their very definition, produce individuality through active individual interpretations and practices.

> This classificatory system, which is the product of the internalization of the structure of social space, in the form in which it impinges through the experience of a particular position in that space, is, within the limits of economic possibilities and impossibilities (which it tends to reproduce in its own logic), the generator of practices adjusted to the regularities inherent in a condition. It continuously transforms necessities into strategies, constraints into preferences, and, without any mechanical determination, it generates a set of 'choices' constituting lifestyles, which derive their meaning, i.e. their values, from their position in a system of oppositions and correlations.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984:175)

As the following person says, the specific workplace position allowed her to realize many developmental, as well as material potentials and goals, and expand her objective realization of her own capabilities. This person makes it very clear that it was this specific workplace, and not others which she had previously worked in, that was amenable to and supportive of her freedom in pursuing her own developmental processes[4].

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[4] This emphasis placed on the individual agency and process emphasized by Bourdieu (1979, 1984) and Bell (1992), is not a new development in anthropological approach. It is a developed refinement of an emphasis that began long ago, as Kurtz (1978) outlines. Kurtz (1978:42, shows that his emphasis on process was initially advocated in the mid-sixties. Dislocation from this more meaningful and ritually-substantive developmental process can contribute better to understanding the deeply-felt shock upon unemployment, and fear of impending unemployment that Smucker (1994) describes as being especially common among middle-class professionals. This is also discussed in other works, such as Newman (1989) and Burman (1988), as well as being expressed by many of the participants in this study.

> P. I know I got opportunities here on this job I would never gotten anywhere else, I know that, and I'm always very thankful for that
> R. The kind of things like learning?
> P. Yeah, and the things they allowed me to do, I got to do a lot of organizational stuff and conferences and meet people, you know, that I would have never had an opportunity to do probably anywhere else, with the papers that I had - you know, as it did turn out I did get to do a lot, and I really appreciated that and really, you know like benefits and salary and everything I mean, I'd have never got that anywhere else. I knew that from the day I walked in here 'cause, ha! I was just shocked when I first came here! {laughs} 'Cause it was such a different working environment than what I had come from.

This person expresses her opinion that the further learning processes in this specific workplace were such positive experiences that they seemed to 'outweigh' the concurrent stresses of the job. Development of occupational competence alone could not do this, unless it was more specifically related to individual interest, and individual initiative, as this person describes.

> P. Yes, I would say yes, [I enjoyed my job] on the whole, there were a lot of stressful moments, over the years. One of the things that I particularly enjoyed over the years that you were always encouraged, over the years, to pick up, not so much I would say, additional skills, but, for example, a lot of my work in the downtown improvement schemes and downtown revitalization *grew out of my own interest, grew out of my personal interest*, and I would get books, and books from interlibrary loans. And I gradually built up my own body of learning, as opposed to it being formal training, and with the design background, you could pick up on those things, and then, having acquired a body of knowledge on it, you could go on to successive projects in that field, and that really opened up a whole new avenue of the type of work that not only I could do, but this whole office could do. So I found that helped keep it fresh. [*emphasis mine*]

Continuation of the development of individual interests, even within field- and workplace-related parameters, is one way that an element of individual choice can be objectively realized in the specific workplace. The behaviour generated by this individual choice is given personal meaning through recognition of the agency implied in the term 'practice,' as Bell describes, drawing on the work of Bourdieu. In the sense that these theorists use the word 'practice,' and I use it in this study, it refers to a much more dynamic and complex process than 'action.' While an 'act' can refer to almost anything, 'practice' more directly refers to processes of *motivated application* of developed, structured and contextualized awareness.

> … the motivational dynamics of agency, the will to act, which is also integral to the context of action. ...the context of practice, Bourdieu stresses, is never clear cut but full of indeterminacy, ambiguities, and equivocations.
> (Bell 1992:81-83)

The following person, who remained in the workplace as a 'survivor' of the layoffs, describes the valued progressive nature of her workplace positions. She directly refers to the *field* as the context which added value to developmental practice.

> P. I guess my training that I took here when I started was... It started out as a clerk-type position, and became a position as a subdivision assistant. I did most of my training on the job. I had clerical experience since I had worked for a school district as a secretary, so I had taken secretarial training from the business college. When I moved into this position, I had been a secretary for a number of years already, and I looked at this job as a step up. The secretarial work was different, it was more related to Planning, so it was more interesting, it was a challenge.

Another person, who had worked more than ten years in the same workplace, describes her development there, and further personalizes it by showing how she could use her individual organizational ability and apply it in this workplace in creative ways.

> R. And then you took over the library, which was sort of an additional thing?
> P. You know I never realized, you know a library, that's you know, very technical, professional job, and they tried to get me into the university to pick up some, but nobody would let me sit in, so that's why I initially had to go to, just developing - 'cause I'm a very organized person, so I organized it myself, the way I could run it, and it worked I thought.
> P. I had my diploma in journalism from the college here, and then I worked as a reporter and that sort of thing, so then when I came to the commission 13 years ago - I started here in '81, and they were looking for someone with my journalism background, so I started, they actually hired me, actually probably more in a kind of secretarial position, but then when say saw what I could do, my job just sort of

> grew over the years, and then I did a lot of the public relations and I organized their workshops that they had every year and any social activities and did the newsletter - writing and all that kind of stuff.

Bourdieu makes the point that we cannot try to understand the complexities of the point of view, position, and singularity of the individual self, without some knowledge of the contextual and environmental parameters in which the individual is situationally operating. The narrations from my participants make it clear that the structured self and workplace and occupational structures are highly interrelated.

> It is knowledge of the field itself in which they evolve that allows us to best grasp the roots of their singularity, their point of view or position (in a field) from which their particular vision of the world (and the field itself) is constructed.
> (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu and Waquant 1992:107)

The 'function' of field-related parameters is to objectify and contextualize, and thus allow development of specific interests[4]. The objectification is realizable through intense interaction, mutual understanding and clear recognition of the value of this development, which allow the necessary specific feedback. This perspective allows a better understanding of individuals who are willing to make sacrifices that their work did not absolutely necessitate. The following individual shows that the conscious decision to make personal sacrifices was more related to developmental purpose than to financial reward.

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[4] In relation to context and parameters, my participants indicated that it was hard to conceptually separate the informal from the formal, or occupationally-related interaction. This division may be largely an academic one, since the two are so heavily intertwined in actual practice. Daniels and Guppy(1994) provide a good overview of social support in the workplace as combined with many other aspects of workplace participation, and in relation to modifying workplace stress. Marchington *et* al (1994) present a good argument that the personal meanings of workplace participation of many kinds cannot be artificially abstracted from the context of the individual workplace and specific occupation, which is the premise taken from Bourdieu in this chapter.

R. You enjoyed the people, which is what everyone says.
P. Right - and I was committed to it and, I had worked...by the time I got married, I had worked for 14 years, and... in... most of that time, the work was basically my life. Um, I...seldom left the office before 6 at night. And I often brought reading home. And I would think of things during the evening and make notes to myself that I had to do this tomorrow or this is the approach I want to take in this report, And... it was the focus of my life. And, not just because I didn't have another focus, but because I really liked what I was doing, and I thought it was worth doing.
R So you were very conscientious, obviously, and put everything you had into it?
P. Yeah.
R. So that was the concentration of your efforts?
P. Yeah -- work took priority in my life. And... I booked holidays on... pretty short notice, when it looked like there was a gap - that being away was not going to be a problem at work. If something came up then, there was a meeting to go to at night, that was no problem. There was a period in my first job where if I didn't have meetings 3 nights a week it was unusual.
R. And you would put off other things?
P. Well I didn't have anything else, I didn't have time to have a life.. I had work.
R. But you didn't mind that?
P. No, it was my choice. I could have said no, but I don't think I would have been doing my job. Because of the nature of planning work, you always have --- the --- depending on the type of planning you're doing - but if you're doing stuff that involves the community, you have meetings at night - if you work with a planning board or a planning commission, you have meetings at night. The first municipality I worked in, council met at night, so, you had council one night, committee the next week, planning commission one night during that week, and your neighbourhood group another night, and I was working with another group another night -- there wasn't anything left, that was the way it was, and I loved it.

Bourdieu notes the inseparability of *structured* positions from "position-taking," so that every individual position within a given field represents a certain field-related stance.

> The field of positions is methodologically inseparable from the field of stances or position-takings...i.e. the *structured* system of practices and expressions of agents. Both spaces, that of objective positions and that of stances, must be analysed together.
>
> (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu and Waquant 1992:105 [*emphasis mine*])

This meshing of life with work contributes to a personalization of field-related positions, and consequently intensifies the symbolic meaning of these positions.

[3] Workplace Structure and Ritualized, Symbolically-Meaningful Practice

The workplace setting is also personalized and becomes symbolically meaningful as a 'ritual occasion.' Cohen is consistent with the perspective taken here, in noting that although these occasions may be explicit in form, or highly structured, there is great room for individuality.

> Though these ritual forms are more explicit, it does not follow that their meanings are necessarily fixed and uniform. Rather, the ritual occasions are themselves symbolic. They have an 'official' form and rationale, but their participants may well find in them *quite different meaning and experience*. Indeed, it is the very opportunity they afford to their participants to assimilate the symbolic forms to their individual and idiosyncratic experience and social and emotional needs that makes them so compelling and attractive.
>
> (Cohen 1975:53 [*emphasis mine*])

Ritual occasions are occasions for the *process* of bringing diverse individuals together, in a setting in which they can retain their individuality, while sharing general symbolic forms, and adapting them to their own needs. As Moerman says, to disregard the ability of individuals to influence their structural environments, is to ignore processes of affective "negotiation" of individuals and the conceptual categories that they may be placed in. Like structural systems then, characteristics of categories are also individually interpreted and negotiated, and, in this way, created by individual and collective developmental process and practice.

> The relationships between individuals and categories, and between categories and labels, are situated and variable. To call the "somebodies" that interaction requires "concrete classes of determinate persons positively characterised and appropriately labelled" confounds words with people, *products with processes*. ... The relationships between categories and "positive characterizations" are also situated, negotiated, variable. When participants activate a category, its stereotypic ("category-bound," in our technological terminology) characteristics are made relevant and possibly operative. But this, too, is the product of interactive negotiation.
>
> (Moerman 1988:90 [*emphasis mine*])

I have been taking the position here that since so much highly personalized, and thus symbolically referential, individual and collective meaning-creation occurs and is objectified in the workplace, it has to be viewed as a ritualized context, or ritual occasion. Ritual occasions as contexts for meaning-creation is not a new concept among anthropologists. Moore and Myerhoff relate ritual to systematized intelligibility.

> Order, as used here, calls attention to two features in particular: connections and predictability. Connections are established or asserted and some systematic relationships are suggested, whenever items are ordered. By definition, the connection provides an explanation, implies meaning and comprehensibility. Rituals always provide meaning, of varied scope and kind in this way.
> (Moore and Myerhoff 1984:17)

As this person shows, objectification intensifies along with personal identification with position, as individuals' interests develop into occupational competence, lending further meaning to the practice.

> P. As I learned more about it, it got to the point where the engineer could say to me, here are the plans for a new building that's being built, this is the kind of system we want to put in, go ahead and do all the calculations, figure out how much equipment we need to put in there. Figure out how much heat we're gonna lose, how much heat we're gonna gain, and what's the best system for it. And (he) let me do a lot of the design work. That way there was a lot of autonomy I had, some control over what I was doing, I could do all this work and then take it to him and say "this is what I've figured out."

Bourdieu observes what may be the most important function of ritualized occasions; to provide a framework which lends order and meaning to all the incorporated developmental processes. As he observes, without specific contextual frameworks, meaningful comparison is impossible.

> No stylistic characterization of a work of art is possible without presupposing at least implicit reference to the compositional alternatives, whether simultaneous-to

> distinguish it from its contemporaries-or successively-to contrast it with earlier or later works by the same or a different artist.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984:50)

Bocock makes the same observation about the necessity for contextual frameworks, in this case using an example at the societal level, and describing the necessary relationship between social systems and the nature of ritual and symbolic meanings.

> In capitalist societies, and communist ones too, the arts as much as religion have to be developed within a given economic and political framework. This does not mean it could be otherwise, for any social structure will have influences on the rituals and symbols developed, and the meaning they have in their lives.
>
> (Bocock 1974:169)

Ritualized meaning involves 'stylization,' as does any form of communication, whether activity, practice or speech. The shared recognition of that stylization, is what makes any of these forms of communication mutually understandable, and in the highly intelligible workplace context, practice in personalized positions involves stylistic self-development as well. The following person recalled with pride how she had been able to organize the library in this workplace using her own style, which she viewed as working as well as if she had taken formal education in that area. This is another example of the importance of stylistic development, and how it is highly valued in particular workplaces, where the *appreciation* of personal style can depend upon the context of the occupational needs.

> P. What I finally ended up doing was sort of just develop my own system in the library and figuring things out and once a year they would have a - you know a professional, you know like [Brad] come in and catalogue their books. But our needs changed, you know, we didn't need to have it as professional, you know if you want to call it that.

This person had developed "her own" system, used it to place her own style on the library, and thus personalized it and made it more symbolically meaningful. This may allow agents to feel that they are able to place individual interpretations on various situations, whether in workplace social relations or other decisions. Further, appreciation, or recognition of the value of individual style, also contributes to objectifiable valuing of characteristics of the self.

[3a] Emotion, Personalization and Symbolism: Meaningful When Structured

Individual interpretations and the ability to develop and apply very personalized knowledge has been overlooked in much of the literature on organizational culture, according to Mumby and Putnam (1993). My interview data shows clearly how highly valued this developmental ability is. The developmental dynamics of the workplace show that the connection between work and lifestyle becomes much more than one of economic facilitation. It shows that the workplace is a ritualized occasion for a feeling of community, charged with emotion and mutually understood symbolic meanings, along with its more utilitarian purposes.

> Work feelings expose the myth of rationality and signal a rupture in bureaucratic efforts to define or negate emotion. When bureaucracy can no longer obscure or marginalize the devalued terms on the rationality/emotionality dualism, emotion can surface as central to a participatory work context. As a way of knowing that differs from rationality, emotion provides information grounded in personal experience, mutual understanding, and community.
>
> (Putnam and Mumby 1993:55)

The objectification of the self that I've already shown as occurring in the workplace, includes a symbolically-charged emotional identification with individual position and the collective habitus of the workplace. This person shows how the freedom to develop a new workplace in his own style is emotionally satisfying as well.

> P. I'm basically starting it and I can set it up my own way, so I've got a fair bit of latitude in what I do, and it's with one of the municipalities that I've worked with

> for 17 years, so everybody knows me, so it's a pretty good situation compared to what others have to do.

Of course, the contextual setting of the workplace and the parameters of the field place some significant constraints on agents practising within them. Bourdieu describes the nature of some of these, but he also acknowledges that the relationship between individual agents and the contextual parameters they practice within, is somewhat mediated by a constant "restructuring." This is what allows for a degree of freedom associated with application of individual style.

> First, the external determinations that bear on agents situated in a given field (intellectuals, artists, politicians, or construction companies) never apply to them directly, but affect them only through the specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field, after having gone through a *re-structuring* that is all the more important the more autonomous the field, that is, the more it is capable of imposing its specific logic, the cumulative product of its particular history. Second, we can observe a whole range of structural and functional homologies between the field of philosophy, the political field, the literary field, etc., and the structure of social space (or class structure): each has its dominant and its dominated, its struggles for usurpation and exclusion, its mechanisms of reproduction, and so on. but every one of these characteristics takes a specific, irreducible form in each field....
>
> (Bourdieu 1992:105-106)

The necessary restraints of the workplace and the desire for self-fulfilment and creativity on the part of the individual practitioners, would suggest some tension related to structure. I have referred earlier to the workplace setting as a ritual occasion. Ritual is a process equipped to manage, and perhaps transform everyday tensions of this kind. Bloch's description of these emotional, transformative qualities of ritual could easily be applied in the workplace context.

He makes the point that ritual occasions also produce a system of stratification, and at the same time can produce a perception of equality, and common purpose.

> This explains the emotional power of the ritual. It re-presents everything... and establishes from these images an idea of authority that everyone can appear as everyone's authority, as everybody's victory over this life and death. ...ritual appears to establish the authority of everybody, in so far as it brings blessing to everybody, and by this means *transforms everybody*, men and women, into descent beings. Of course in the process the ritual also *establishes differential degrees of authority*, and, indeed, these distinctions are the only politically relevant ones, but it presents these as part of an authority and transcendence which all share, or rather will share. Indeed one cannot imagine a person so devoid of status that he or she would not derive some satisfaction from having a *place in an ordered whole that stands against immortality, unpredictability, and death.*
>
> (Bloch 1986:189 [*emphasis mine*])

There is a distinct comfort in knowing that you as an individual, are also part of an "ordered whole", which in the case of the workplace is a very specific one, based around mutually understood and highly intelligible parameters. This kind of "ordered whole" necessitates both a certain degree of homogeneity and individuality, in all of the symbolically and structurally meaningful developmental processes discussed in this chapter. This also means that we cannot try to artificially separate social structure or systems from highly personal symbolic or ritualized meaning, as the former provides context and intelligibility to the latter. Foucault, (1977:182-183) discusses institutionalized discipline, and the dual aspect of institutionalized "normalization." In this sense as well, any possibility of a "normalized homogeneity," also of necessity accentuates diversity, as it facilitates contrast and comparison, within an orchestrated, or ordered whole.

> In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to *render the differences useful by fitting them one to another.*
>
> (Foucault 1977:184, [*emphasis mine*])

[4] Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have shown how important it is to professional workers that the workplace provides the opportunity for personal field-related progression, which is the continuation of a process initiated by individual interests, and developed through post-secondary education. I have shown a symbolic importance attached to development in the specific workplace, which relates to development of the self, and ways in which the two become superimposed. The workplace is unique as a setting for the actualization or objectification of specific field-related knowledge, values and priorities, which, however interpreted, are also integral to the self. All of these symbolic and pragmatic elements contribute to the symbolic significance of the individual habitus, and come together in the specific workplace. The collective habitus of such a workplace is similarly dynamic, and in the next chapter I will examine some of these dynamics in greater detail.

I should mention here, as I did in the introduction, that the individuals being introduced in chapter four and five, including persons with vastly differing educational levels, a wide range of salaries, duties and so forth, would in Bourdieu's (1984) terms, be properly representative of many levels of very distinct class habituses. Through my 'amalgamation' of these very distinct class habituses within the context of this workplace environment, I am no doubt severely blurring the specificity of the concept of habitus. This specificity is acknowledged here as being an integral element of the concept of habitus; in the same way that individuality is essential in understanding of the social 'self.'

In this case, I am intentionally presenting the collective habitus of the workplace, as a temporary microcosmic locale, which differs in structure and interaction from the 'outside' society. This does not mean that class habitus, and other central differences that contribute to the 'composition' of the personal habitus are suspended here. However, as my advisor from this workplace made very clear to me, in the intense interaction revolving around occupational purpose in this setting, while these differences and specificities were not suspended, they certainly were temporarily muted by such a strong perception of common and collective purpose. This strong sense of common purpose is elaborated upon in the next chapter, and the muting of specific statuses for the purpose of the smooth functioning of the collectivity is a main theme here.

The eventual breakup of these 'pieces of the puzzle' (albeit some much larger than others, yet all equally integral) would not be adequately understood unless all workplace members are included in the collective habitus of the workplace. As an analogy, it is not hard to theoretically justify Turner's (1967) assertion that statuses and role sets are temporarily suspended in the context of cohorts in a rite of passage, *due to common purpose and experiences.* It should then not be hard to understand tat least the perceived suspension, or muting, of these specific habitus differences for the temporary period of a workday.

CHAPTER FIVE:

COLLECTIVE HABITUS: PERSONALIZED POSITIONS, OCCUPATION AND THE WORKPLACE 'FAMILY'

In this chapter, I focus on some of the ways in which symbolically meaningful practice, as outlined in chapter four, leads to a personalization of the specific occupational workplace collectivity, as well as to individual positions. This personalization, involving self-identification with specific position and workplace context, is important in a consideration of the field-specific workplace as a collective habitus.

In the first section, I provide a brief overview of the importance of *personalized* workplace positions and similarly personalized hierarchical organization. In the second section, I bring these facets of highly personalized workplace practice together, and show how specific workplace characteristics are symbolically meshed with meanings of the specific occupational field, so that the workplace and field are personalized almost to the point of anthropomorphism.

In the third section I discuss the suitability of the 'workplace members as family' metaphor, which was frequently made by participants in this study. In the fourth section I deal with some of the processes involved, in creating and maintaining the harmony implied by this sense of workplace 'family.' I also show ways in which these dynamic workplace processes and positions can quite often be taken for granted and not consciously thought about very much, when they become very familiarized. I end this chapter by positing that the structural uniqueness of the field-specific workplace, along with the extremely high level of self- and inter-personal identification found there, lends itself to the possibility of experiencing something more than community, very close to the intense common bond that Turner (1969:93) called "communitas."

All of the discussions in this chapter build upon the material presented in chapter four. They relate to the necessity of a kind of 'orchestration,' or systematic organization, of individual practices, which contributes to further self-identification with the specific workplace.[5]

[1] Highly Personalized Positions and the Importance of Hierarchical Structure

The nature of workplace positions and hierarchical arrangements are structural properties that provide context for individual meanings and consistent relationships. This follows the elaboration on the importance of contextualization in chapter four, which is a widely accepted principle of ethnography, namely that meanings and interactions are highly situational, and have to be situationally framed. I outlined Bourdieu's observations on the importance of contextualization in understanding the individual habitus in the previous chapter. This is consistent with a much earlier observation by Vincent, (1978:175) as she discusses how "Action theory in anthropology begins by locating individuals within the framework of both formal and interstitial social organization and then proceeds to the analysis of political action and interaction."

Most middle-class professionals have completed extensive education directed towards a specific occupational role. This highly directed educational process likely also contributes to a strongly developed association of the self with a specific workplace position (whether expected, attained or lost). As individuals continue working and learning, now in the context of applied knowledge, it appears that their personal identification with their positions markedly increases, as long as this practice is seen as able to be individually styled and dynamic. This person, who had become re-employed after working in the same field for over two decades, shows a marked self-identification with his personal development within the parameters of the field. This is expressed in terms of his ability to "call upon this background" and "surprise" others with his extensive knowledge base in the new position. It is obvious that both his former and present positions are highly personalized.

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[5] I refer to a female executive in this chapter, but it should be noted that I interviewed two female executives in the land-use planning field, and they were both involved in the orchestration of agents in the workplace.

> P. And the other really interesting thing is in all my background is upon call, all of the time. Whereas before I would get a phone call and sort of take my time and look something up. Now it's all massed together so projects that I had done in the past for Deepwell sometimes come off the shelf and get dusted off and I talk to these people about ideas and possibilities and things like that. It's exciting but it's also challenging because you have got to remember all the things that you have done in the past. I'm constantly surprising these people. Because in real terms I have been working with these people more than anyone else. None of them really realize that. I know the mayors that go back six terms. There's not one employee, I don't think there's one employee, that works for the Town in the administration office that has worked with as many of the politicians that I have.

The following individual relates the importance of being given projects to work on without a great deal of supervision.[2] She associates this ability with a high level of personal identification with her position, and the characteristics of the specific workplace. She expresses as main workplace characteristics, the nature of the hierarchical arrangement and individual personalities, and especially the "attitude" of the senior engineer.

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[2] Eicher and Thompson (1986) provide a comprehensive account of the importance of factors such as job complexity, variety of tasks performed and relative autonomy of the worker, in relation to identification with work and position. Another informative text is that edited by Kelly and Clegg, (1982) in which various chapters discuss ways in which workplaces can and have been redesigned in order to give more autonomy and control to individuals in a variety of positions.

> P. They had one engineer and about 6 draftsmen, and the engineer's attitude was that if all my senior draftspersons are busy, and a small project comes through, I want my junior draftspersons to be able to do it without any help. So that went a long way - it gives you confidence, and then you really feel like going to work because you have a project, this is the one you're working on, no one else is hanging over you're head, no one telling you what to do, and you go in and you know "that's what I'm doing today," and I can plan how far I have to go. Even now, when I drive around the city, I see projects that we worked on (in engineering) and I say "I know where the ducts go " - it's sort of, it feels more that it's mine. You feel a little bit of a responsibility. The hierarchy of the workplace and the personalities of the people are very important to me.

Autonomy and control in the individual position is of central value to this next person. He has completely integrated these issues with the attitudes and personalities of co-workers, which lends meaning and a sense of individuality to the hierarchical arrangement of the specific workplace. The following person was forced to accept a lower status title; a politically necessary move that did not affect his salary or duties. His reaction shows how intense the personal identification with position or rank can be. Foucault's (1977:181) idea that "rank itself is its own reward or punishment" becomes very clear.

> P. About 2 years ago, there was, with all these government cutbacks that occurred, there was a real bunch of bogus crap that happened - what happened was I had to take a, I don't know what you'd call it - a demotion, but ah, "restructuring" they called it, to kind of, ah, make up - I think what they were after is they wanted, they wanted to sort of establish a system where they could protect themselves when they had to let people go. And basically it was a bit of a setup. Is really what it was. 'Cause that position was ah, when the government said, there'll be so much money cut, you know, year to year to year, I think (the boss) must have thought, "well Jeez what are we going to do here we're gong to have to ensure that we don't get rid of a planner," which I was at that time. And they basically said - "due to restructuring, budget cutbacks, your position as a planner has been abolished" - we are offering you this position as planning assistant. It was a real, it was a real shady setup, is what it was, and I certainly wasn't happy about it, but, ah, I had to... kind of roll with it unfortunately.

> R. Did this demotion affect your pay?
> P. No it didn't.
> R. OK, it was just a title thing?
> P. A title thing.

The following quote from a person who retained her workplace position, illustrates how motivational rewards in the workplace, to be meaningful to her, would include social recognition in some ritualistic form, not necessarily having to do with increased salary, but definitely related to title or status.

> P. Well [increased salary] would be ideal, but I think there has to be an awards system even if it can't be monetary, there has to be something, [related to recognized titles] so that you can say, "I wanted this and now I got this."

Individuals are highly aware of personalised titles[3], as the following re-employed person notes. His new title is directly associated with his perceptions of how much others respect him.

> P. There's more prestige actually with this position. I mean you phone somebody up and you tell them about what the title is, you can detect a difference.

I re-interviewed the next person after she had begun a new job in her field. She notes the importance of her individual agency in decision-making which has increased. What she calls the "evolving" of the new workplace probably means that she can personalize her position by applying not only her knowledge, but her individual style to the workplace environment.

> P. Yes, the most immediate application and change is that I'm making actual decisions, where before I was solely recommending in terms of land use decisions, like every municipality has that. The bylaw officer makes some decisions and the municipal planning commission makes other decisions. I 'm also, in my capacity,

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[3] Stevenson and Bartunek (1996) examine different workplace positions and statuses related to power, and the dynamics of creating what they term a "cultural agreement."

> the development officer so now I make certain decisions. And as we evolve the department, I will be making more of the decisions that the municipal planning commission used to make as well, so I'll have a fair bit of discretion as to what I decide.....

[1a] Empirical Structuring: Personalized Through Interpretative Agency

Turner (1977:201) conceptually distinguishes between two main levels of structure; the more obvious status divisions, and the "deeper categorical meanings." In order to acknowledge the personalization of structured workplace positions, we must take the position that one structural level *always* implies the other, and they operate concurrently in order to be meaningful.

> ....that is, a structure of "unconscious categories" located at a deeper level than the empirical, but rather what Robert Merton has termed "the patterned arrangements of role-sets, status-sets and status sequences" consciously recognized and regularly operative in a given society.
>
> (Turner 1977:201)

What Turner refers to as a structure of "unconscious categories" may not be readily observable, but these have to do with self-categorizations which lend individualized meaning to the "empirical structuring." As Bell notes, what constitutes ritualized meaning-creation is essentially the dynamic relationship between the practice of the self and the *symbolically*-structured environment. Her main point is that, like the "unconscious categories" Turner refers to, ritualized meanings may be similarly not consciously recognized. The nature of the interaction between agent and environment, as well as the environment itself, may both be very familiarized through practice.

> The strategies of ritualization are particularly rooted in the body, specifically, the interaction of the social body within a symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environment. Essential to ritualization is the circular production of a ritualized body which in turn produces ritualized practices. Ritualization is embedded within the dynamics of the body defined within a symbolically structured environment. An

> important corollary to this is the fact that ritualization is a particularly 'mute' form of activity. *It is designed to do what it does without bringing what it does across the threshold of discourse or systematic thinking.*
>
> (Bell 1992:93 [*emphasis mine*])

There is general acknowledgement that formal workplace structure is necessary. At the same time, the individuality of the "deeper categories," "embodied meaning-creation processes," and consequent diverse symbolism associated with each position, contribute to the objectively construed perception of personalized positions. In this way, what may seem to be very rigid and deterministic roles and statuses in the workplace, take on a flexibility and agency which are expressed as personification. Bourdieu notes that much of what we call personal style or taste, can also be developed and communicated to other people often without consciously thinking about the processes.

> The system of matching properties, which includes people - one speaks of a "well-matched couple," and friends like to say they have the same tastes - is organized by taste, a system of classificatory schemes which may only very partially become conscious although, as one rises in the social hierarchy, lifestyle is increasingly a matter of what Weber calls the 'stylization of life.' Taste is the basis of the mutual adjustment of all the features associated with a person, which the old aesthetic recommended for the sake of the mutual reinforcement they give one another; the countless pieces of information a person consciously or unconsciously imparts endlessly underline and confirm one another, offering the alert observer the same pleasure an art-lover derives from the symmetries and correspondences produced by a *harmonious distribution of redundancies.*
>
> (Bourdieu 1984:174 [*emphasis mine*])

To the outsider, the workplace may seem to constitute a "distribution of redundancies." To the agent, it may be a very personalized creative context, experienced through the "countless pieces of information" which are initiated and shared there. The following person, an executive director of a workplace, shows that the required formal structure may camouflage many flexible and informal processes.

> P. The government requires some kind of structure. So then you had to have some kind of structure, but our structure was always pretty loose anyway, so anybody always had access to the director, they always had access to the support staff. So it was all a pretty loose structuring.

This shows both individualization of her position, along with the concurrent flexibility necessary in order for co-workers to be able to do the same with theirs. She elaborates further on this, showing the application of personal philosophy to workplace position.

> P. When we changed [to less bureaucracy and regulation], that was a reflection of my philosophy on how things should be done. And this old regulatory bureaucracy "I know what's best for you" thing is gone. And it should have been gone a long time ago. And I would get more into "what's [the client's] interest in this." And it's an attitude thing. It relates to what people bring to the workplace. If you're going to bring to the workplace your desire to prove that you are right and they are wrong, that you've got the expertise, that you know it all, and you're going to tell them what's best for them, and leave it at that, then that reflects a certain kind of individual in the workforce. Whereas if it's a team approach, you say "this is what I can contribute to your decision-making, this is what I can add", and then they make their decisions after that. It can't be a power thing, it can't be a power trip. There's no need for that.

This may allow agents to feel that they are able to place individual interpretations on various situations, whether in workplace social relations or other decisions, which gives a sense of personalization. This personalization adds a deeper meaning, through objectively realized agency, to what otherwise could be construed as mainly restrictive, constraining hierarchical structuring. This person expresses the importance of the ability to place an individualistic value interpretation on an issue.

> P. Just because of the length of time you sort of almost took a paternalistic approach to how you dealt with things, like if, say a developer had proposed something to take place in a particular municipality, - I might think, "I don't think that's too good for that town or something" - you put it, in addition to sort of a legal interpretation on a situation, you might also put a value interpretation on it.

Geertz distinguishes between cultural and social systems on the basis of the very different nature of their respective integrative structures.

> The nature of the distinction between culture and social system is brought out more clearly when one considers the contrasting sorts of integration characteristic of each of them. this contrast is between what Sorokin has called a "logico-meaningful integration" and what he has called "causal-functional integration." By logico-meaningful integration, characteristic of culture, is meant the sort of integration one finds in a Bach fugue, in Catholic dogma, or in the general theory of relativity; it is a unity of style, of logical implication, of meaning and value. By causal-functional integration, characteristic of the social system, is meant the kind of integration one finds in an organism, where all the parts are united in a single causal web; each part is an element in a reverberating causal ring which 'keeps the system going." and because these two types of integration are not identical, because the particular form each of them takes does not directly imply the form the other will take, there is an inherent incongruity and tension between the two and between both of them and a third element, the pattern of *motivational integration within the individual which we usually call personality structure.*
>
> (Geertz 1973:145 [*emphasis mine*])

It is the dialectical nature of these systemic relationships which contributes to individual room to manoeuvre within structures or contexts, and allows personalization of occupational positions. Geertz notes that these contexts are themselves often incongruous and in tension, and further recognizes that all of the "contexts within contexts" that any individual operates within are of necessity subject to individual interpretation. If the parameters of the "empirical structures" that Turner (1977:201) referred to are maintained and consistent, then the incongruities and tension will remain within the framework of intelligible individualism and personality, rather than ambiguity. The particular ways that these incongruities and tensions are worked out or 'orchestrated,' along with a recognition of individuality and personalization of positions, (which is also a recognition of the importance of agency) contributes to the main valued aspects of workplace 'atmosphere.' All of these processes and interactional understandings, when they are viewed mainly as cooperative and complementary, contribute to a personalization at the level of the specific occupation, as objectively applied in a distinct way, through practice in a similarly personalized workplace.

[2] Personalization of the Integrated Occupation and Workplace

The following person describes how the particular workplace had a certain atmosphere, which was directly related to a specific workplace philosophy and style. It is very clear that it was an environment that she felt was unique to this workplace. She alludes to her being able to interact in this environment much more effectively, as it 'meshed' well with her personal values and characteristics. This relationship of the self and organizational structuring, when complementary, obviously contributes both to a higher valuing of individual position, which is associated with the perceived distinctiveness of the specific workplace.

> P. This institution is very different than the previous one, in terms of treating employees as responsible adults and who are able to just determine when something needs to be done and when it doesn't. Very different in that way. Here you're trusted to know what your job is and to do it. And there isn't the level of public contact that there was [in her former job], there it was very important that you be there, between 8 and 4:30, and there were no excuses for not doing that. Here it's much more flexible. There's no taxpayer coming to my door. So if I decide to work from 9 until 5:30, instead of 8 'till 4:30, that's fine. And, nobody even questions it. You don't have to tell somebody "I'm going to work this time." You're treated like an adult that knows what they're doing and trusted to do it. And it's taking me some time to get used to that.

Many comments made by my participants definitely combined a personalization of individual position with personalization of the specific field and/or workplace. These kinds of integrated perceptions were more common than expressions of the importance of 'isolated' individual positions. This further illustrates the artificial nature of trying to conceptually separate the individual from the structured context, and shows the dialectical relationship between agent and situational environment. This relationship is essential in personalization of positions, occupational roles, and the realization of personally meaningful collective habitus in the workplace.

A great deal of reciprocal appreciation can go on in the collective habitus, and provide positive social feedback. This feedback is based largely on occupationally-related interaction rather than societal or ideological criteria. This highly educated professional saw her role in the workplace as being able to complement the planning field with her own specialized field of design planning.

> P. I have an architecture background. I have a bachelors in architecture and a masters in planning.
> R. With this more extensive educational background than most planners, wouldn't you hold a higher titled position than most planners here?
> P. Not so much above them, but more of a lateral position. Sort of a specialized expertise, and I act as a resource for the other planners and all the municipalities, so if something came along where they needed that type of expertise, they would come to me for that. So if someone is writing a bylaw where they needed a design plan to go along with that, then they would come to me for that. I had eight years of training. I've been here for 15 years.

This illustrates that cooperation and complementary agency can be viewed as more important than hierarchical status, and shows the importance of the workplace members acting as an ordered whole, towards effective application of occupational objectives. The following person shows that the specific workplace is also seen as distinct in the way that they *apply* field parameters, compared to other workplaces in the same occupational area.

> P. The other thing with planning commissions too, is that there are different levels at which the bureaucracy was put in to effect at each commission. *We have some of our commissions that thrived on bureaucracy, thrived on the fact that they were a regulatory agency, and that they were calling the shots.* And they would make a developer, necessarily or unnecessarily, go through all kinds of processes, in order

> to get what they wanted. *Our philosophy and approach here, was, is not the same.* We've always thought of this as part of the development, where if something was way out of line, that we knew just wasn't going to be acceptable, we just tell them, instead of making them step through the hoops, pay their fees, and go through the whole appeal process, we'd be honest with them. Just tell them, "this isn't going to be acceptable." So they can go back and fix this, and we do that to, tell them maybe you can do this in this way or something. But you see this is the unfortunate part with this system - *we've all been targeted with the same brush*, and there's no way that all of the planning commissions did things in the same manner. Up until the mid-eighties or so, we were a regulatory agency, we would tell the municipalities "we know what's best for you, we can tell you what's not best for you, what you have to do, what you shouldn't be doing, how to deal with anybody that comes in or a subdivision or whatever." *We [the specific commission] changed that. We changed that around.* We decided that we'll give the municipalities our best planning advice, whenever an application comes in for a subdivision development, and planning advice, the ultimate decision was with the municipality. And we don't regulate it anymore. And in fact, through those 7 or 8 years, we just wound down all the regulatory aspects of our work. *That's not the way we do our business here*. We do it as a consultant agency. [*emphasis mine*]

This argument strongly implies that the specific commission in which she worked has a distinct philosophy and flexibility, so that it *cannot be directly compared* to other commissions. The specific workplace is obviously the context in which the field is *personalized*.

In many cases, there is an understandable identification of the self with the specific field-related workplace. This is not unexpected given the histories of related interests, values, and education which all contribute to cooperative workplace practice and social interaction. Bourdieu also notes (1993:74) that within a field, the agents or practitioners shape the history and development of a field, and contribute to the legitimisation of the field itself. It seems natural then, that when a field is threatened, these agents perceive it as a personal threat. This has more to do with personal identification, or personalization of the field, than with economic concerns (many of the people I interviewed were very traumatized, even when they were near retirement age, and not financially threatened). When Planning Commissions and the entire occupational field of land-use Planning were threatened by government cutbacks, many of my participants felt that their field (strongly associated with themselves as individuals) had become a specific 'target' for discontinuation. The following person, formerly employed in the same workplace for over twenty years, personalized the field by relating its discontinuation to uninformed values or morally poor decisions.

> P. I think planning as we knew it.....is, that's passé, it's gone {sadly}. You'll never see that again - I don't even think you'd see it with another change of government, because it's going to be too hard to reactivate - they're going to love the fact, irregardless of new governments, that they're going to be coming in saying," hey, we're surviving without it, why spend the extra money to have good planning - so what if we lose 350, 400 people a year on bad highway crossings, poor zoning that are occurring, so what if we're losing a ton of good farmland and wildlife habitat and things like that, who cares - we're doing what Ralph originally envisioned, and that's getting rid of the deficit - who cares if we're all going to be working in shoe stores or for A&W" - you know, everything for the small businessman.

Although the following person is speaking about specific areas of deterioration, the personalization of the field and workplace can be seen here in the analogies of an impending 'physical sickness,' and the function of the Planning Commissions as providing 'preventative medicine.' This person emphasizes that the field of land-use planning was not understood as having this crucial role, further illustrating a perception of the specific occupational logic as only being understood by specific agents in the collective habitus.

> P. *What we've done all through the years here, we've been committed to. And we have felt that it's important. It hasn't always been recognized. It's not obvious, you can't 'measure' it sometimes. [the value of the field] is not recognized until it's gone.* The cost of losing this system is not going to be seen for maybe 5, 10, 15 years. And that's what I've struggled with too. The present government is saying "we want to make Alberta financially ready", but they should also be thinking of making it *physically* ready. If you want to attract business and attract development

> you want to attract it into what is a secured planning environment - they want to know what the rules are, they want to know what the zoning is, they want to know how much land is available, what the transportation is. It's not just money. It's not just that Alberta might be debt-free, and they can come in here, they want to know other things as well. And I think it's a short-sighted period - we're losing. They've got families, they've got *personal values* that they bring to the communities, they've got environmental concerns. *Quality of life* - they don't just bring a body to work 8 hours a day, they bring families concerned about schooling, recreational services, choices of which community they can live in.
> R. And all of these things involving quality of living is what you were involved with in planning?
> P. That's right. In fact I think that any corporation that's worth its salt has a lot more respect for an area that is making well-considered planning decisions. The fly-by-nights are the ones who come in and rob a community and then leave. *We had some degree of a protective effect against that kind of thing.* If that's not there anymore, there's going to be too much influence towards the quick dollar. [*emphasis mine*]

The next person expresses a related perspective, in this case emphasizing that there could have been improvements made to the regional planning system instead of the government targeting all of the commissions for elimination. This shows recognition of the importance of flexibility in evolving and adapting within occupational parameters, which was in this case not even an option.

> P. The discussion papers that we saw through municipal affairs started with when the planning commissions are gone, "this is what we'll do." There was no opportunity to even discuss it or anything. And instead of looking at us and saying "this is how you could be doing better" we were just all targeted for elimination. The only problem is that when my anger is directed towards the government, then I have no real way to channel that.

This individual emphasizes personalized identification with the broader category of civil service workers. In his opinion, civil service occupations are considered by many people as an unnecessary tax burden, while his specific occupation deserved to be considered separately, and valued due to its unique purpose.

> P. I happen to think that we do get screwed by large business, and conglomerates, and chambers of commerce, and the government that's supporting these kinds of organizations; we're getting screwed by them too. And consequently, the trouble for me is that since I'm a civil servant, I'm not only the 'trouble,' I'm an 'enemy' too. And it's more than just politics. When I listen to Steve West[4] talk, there's some kind of ingrained value there, and he can manifest it in politics. But the reason that he's doing certain things is that he makes it very clear that civil service is bad business. I know that Steve West, I know the government has told him to cut 20% [from civil service]. And it's been more like 65%.

The next comment from a survivor of the layoffs shows how the changes in his field, along with the layoffs in the workplace, have altered his conception of 'who he is' related to purpose. This person shows a high degree of personal identification with a very specific occupational purpose and structured role.

> P. And now people say "what's the difference, you're still going to be a planner working out of a central office." The difference is the focus. When you're a regional planner, you're looking at things from a regional perspective. Under this new system, as a municipal service organization, *all you are is a local planner,* working out of a central office, hired by the municipalities. So *I'm little more than a consultant* working for that municipality. What happens, and I felt it happened already, - as a regional organization we tried to give a regional perspective to the municipalities, on how this problem should be settled. We were like a third party. And now, that municipality has hired us, they tell me, "we need this, how do we get it." And *now I'm preparing something like a lawyer.* But in the old system, as a regional authority, we would have tried to come up with the best system for both parties [the municipality and the prospective developer].

In performing their occupational roles within the workplace then, individuals are always confirming the individual and societal importance of their chosen fields. In a very real way, this involves a confirmation and preservation of their own 'selves,' since the chosen field has so much to do with individual interests and choices. The specific field and workplace are personalized and centrally valued due to considerations of purpose, unique historical and ongoing developmental processes, and the ability to objectify educational knowledge through practice. All of these things contribute to a 'meshing' of the self and the occupationally-specific workplace. However, there is an unique kind of social interaction within the workplace as well, which further personalizes it and lends meaningfulness to the interactive dynamics found in this context.

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[4] At the time of my interviewing, Mr. Steve West was the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs.

[3] Collective Habitus - More Personal than Community: The Workplace 'Family'

The social interaction in the specific workplace was expressed as another centrally valued aspect of work by both the individuals who had been dislocated from the workplace, and those still working there. That so many people described their co-workers as 'family' was another significant indicator of the personalization of the workplace, since no one referred to it using other available analogies such as 'community.' The analogy of co-workers as family members was very directly made by many individuals, and in our society, 'family' denotes one of the most intensely personal social units. Such intimate relationships are an essential social feature of a highly meaningful collective habitus.

This analogy may only be appropriate in smaller workplaces with a high degree of face to face interaction.[5] As the following person notes, this specific workplace did not take on such a high degree of intimacy until it was reduced in number by budget cuts in the mid 1970's. The familial atmosphere was also occupationally-related, since the family atmosphere intensified only when there was a general perception that everyone was occupationally contributing.

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[5] Yoon et al (1994) undertook an interesting study of workplace interaction and how this involves the creation of sub-groups. This study indicates that interpersonal relations may be just as central in large and smaller workplaces, since subgroups form in larger ones, keeping the social interaction highly personalized.

> P. I can't comment on three years ago because I wasn't here three years ago, I was here in 76 when it was the largest this office was when there was 56 people here and I was here then and I can't compare it . Then it wasn't a really personal relationship with everyone because everybody was working on projects that maybe took them out of the office and stuff and we weren't as close as you'd think. But when I say we are *more of a family now* there was no one [not being productive] and since it was such a large office [before] and people tend, and um money was free and we could do whatever we wanted and so like a lot of people got their back up, and the people that are here now are productive people. There's no dead weight left, everybody's working hard, so that's what kind of *bound it more*.
>
> [*emphasis mine*]

The next individual, who was still employed, noted other considerations that helped to create a familial workplace, once the "difficult types" had been removed. It is obvious that in the layoffs in the mid 1970's, the individuals who could not cooperate well occupationally and/or socially had been removed, causing a much more highly personalized interaction.

> P. Um, generally that's [the people/environment] been a positive thing - there's been some over the years that have been difficult to get along with, as opposed to some of the others that have become really good friends. That's one of the sadder things about all of the layoffs, since really over the last few years we've gotten the place to the point where most of the difficult types, and the 'oddballs,' if you will, were no longer here, and it was like one happy family, and now it's falling apart again. So that's been - yeah, the people have been an important part of it, but they've also been an important part of the aggravation along the way, but that's people.

This individual further reinforces the point that the family atmosphere definitely increased when the people who could not get along socially as a family were no longer there.

> P....But right now, um there's none that I would like to see leave this place at all , everyone seems to get along really well , it's more like family. And it's been like that to, to an extent, for the entire time that I've been here.

It is interesting that once again we can see the impossibility of conceptually separating the nature of personal relationships in the workplace from the context of the occupational parameters; in this case, involving productivity and teamwork. The following person shows that along with more formal work-related practice, informal socialization could serve to 'blend' the social self with the occupational self[6].

> P. The coffee thing in the morning was you know, a combination of business and pleasure both, because we'd sit down and, sometimes the hockey scores or whatnot would get into the conversation, but normally we'd talk about what was happening with our families and what was happening with work - it was all kind of mixed together - and then usually what would interrupt the situation is one of us would get a phone call, and it would be back to issues for the public or whatever. Sort of 'shoot the shit.'

The next person further indicates the significance of these blended occupational and social coffee-break times, as she points out that many co-workers would come to the office half an hour before they were to start work, in order to socialize and "connect."

> P. Everyday you'd go in there, and from 8-8:30 was a time to just sit and have coffee and just visit, whatever you'd been up to and what's news and we just would visit you know. And then you'd start working around 8:30 and you'd just carry on and still have your coffee-break and still go in and talk, so yeah, it's just a good place.
> R. So people would actually show up early so they would have that time to talk?
> P. Yeah.
> R. And coffee breaks were really important?
> P. You could go in there and it was your time to connect.

The coffee-break ritual and the daily blending of social and occupational areas, give a sense of continuity, support and security, while contributing to the high level of intelligibility found in the collective habitus. As Moore and Myerhoff state, these are fundamental properties of ritual which make it meaningful.

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[6] Hodson (1991) illustrates the wide variety of interaction in the workplace focussing on the great amount of differing kinds of behaviours as indicative of the individualism of any given position. George and Jones (1997) show how individual values, attitudes and moods in the workplace influence each other towards a collective social understanding. Allcorn (1995) examines how these elements of social interaction reduce stress.

> These [systematic] relationships are given repetitively in ritual. Certainly one of the purposes accomplished by such repetitiveness is the message of predictability. The repetitive insists and may even persuade that its messages are durably true, now and in the future. It gives information that affairs and states, attitudes and understandings are stable; we may count on them, make plans in terms of them. As such, rituals are promises about continuity. The studies of the social rituals we call etiquette, the greetings and departures, gestures/manners, and "social forms," are germane here. ...Social reality and social relationships are endlessly stated and restated in allegedly empty ritual behaviours, which when viewed analytically are found to convey a wealth of social agreements essential for ongoing interactions.
> (Moore and Myerhoff 1984:17)

These properties are reflected in the ways in which people described the atmosphere in the specific workplace, using analogies relating to various properties of the family. For example, one of the younger individuals in this study stressed the nurturing characteristics of this specific workplace, indicating a symbolic association of co-workers as being supportive in the same way that parents are.

> R. So was this place sort of like a second family then?
> P. Well very close, and we did a lot of things as an office that uh, through the social committee and gift committee and that, we had barbecues, we had Christmas parties and, we'd have parties within the office, different things. Yeah, it was strange because I know a lot of people that have problems getting along with (co-workers) - I have 2 friends that work in banks, and they say it's just terrible working with all these women, but *we all got along really, really well, it was a really nurturing environment.* You knew if something happened to you there was always a friend you could come to and, even if there was something wrong at work, you knew it would get worked-out. And you didn't really have to worry that you had messed-up too badly.
> [*emphasis mine*]

This person also emphasized the supportive nature of the specific workplace members, and referred to the male co-workers as "brothers." The layoffs were a process of losing these supportive 'family' members.

> P. I have 4 brothers, that's all I've got so that's why I relate to [fellow workers] as brothers, 'cause that's all I ever had.
> R. So in a very real way then, [unemployment] was like being cut off from your family?
> P. It was and so when the layoffs occurred and you'd see another brother fall by the wayside, everybody felt it very much, so when you're a part of that, everybody was very supportive and concerned when you went through it, ...

Another person also uses the analogy of brothers, and further notes a realization of how strongly their social identity was intertwined with the specific workplace. Viewing co-workers as family members indicates such a strong social bond, that individuals' social identities became very intertwined with occupationally-related identities, and *both* were associated with the specific workplace.

> P. They were like brothers all the time, every day, and all of a sudden they were gone, they're not there anymore or the different people here. You know, in that way, I guess my identity was in here socially more than I ever realized, but not, not as far as self-worth is concerned. I mean I know that I, I'm the person I am, not because of the job I had here, but because of different things.

The following two people used the analogy of the family in reference to the workplace as well as in the broader context of interaction with people outside the workplace. These individuals indicate that the occupationally-necessitated, extra-workplace interaction combined the social with the occupational, as it did in the specific workplace. The first person cited below acknowledges tensions and stress in these interactions, yet still expresses it as a central value.

> P. Well, it was a lot of public relations, a lot of dealing with associations and, um, you had to like people, and there was a fair bit of abuse, you had to put up with flak from politicians and a certain amount of people, that are that way, but the majority of people are good; that part I enjoyed - the people end of it.

> P. When you work with a number of municipalities over a period of time, you sort of, uh, it's almost like a family, kind of a relationship, at least in my situation it felt that way, and when the layoff actually occurred, it was like I'd been cut off from

> some of the family. And, you've probably encountered that from other employees, you know, in some cases you see them more than other people, members of your family!

As one person put it, another characteristic of the family involves discord and tensions, and working these things out socially. This was another way that the workplace members were conceptualized as a 'family.'

> P. After 13 years it's like your family I mean sure you have fights with some of them and everything, and so of course there are some you miss more than others, I mean I ain't going to lie about that, but it is, you know you sort of like to think - I think sometimes even the sadness of - we've been with these people every day for 13 years, and you know, reality is that you're not going to see them very much.

Even an individual who had started a new job in his field when I interviewed him 3 months later, noted that it was not mainly the 'sequential time-structuring' that he found significant, but the positional social relations. It is obvious that he missed the more informal discussions with peers, which was more important than his higher status in the new workplace, where people had to obey him.

> R. Things have got a sequence to them and a predictability that they didn't have before?
> P. To a certain extent, I mean the personal or interpersonal relationships with the staff are a little bit different now. In that these people that just used to talk or discuss issues, some of them have to do stuff for me now.

This person refers to workplace members as "extended family." She notes that they were like family in all respects, except that in this case they are sadly unlike a 'family,' since upon unemployment they are more likely to completely lose touch of each other

> P. They were extended family - they're not like family because with family you never lose touch, but with these people, I'm going to lose touch, I mean it's a sad thing but that's a fact of life. There's a family tie that you never leave and you're always in touch, but, well you know what your family's up to but, when you don't have that family tie, even though you felt like you had this extended family, you just don't stay in touch and you do lose that. So I do miss that.

With the biological family, as in the workplace, it takes a lot of effort to develop and maintain this strong familial social bond.

[4] The Workplace Family: Orchestrated Harmony

The generation of family-like[7] relationships necessitates highly intelligible structure, and involves considerable orchestration and harmonization of various positions and personalities. This is achieved partly through the occupational parameters and associated social expectations of each position, and somewhat by the distinct management philosophy but for the most part, the harmony must come from individual agenc[illegible]

Fernandez (1986:178) uses an analogy to describe the feelings of a 'collective wholeness' which is very compatible with the concept of the collective habitus. He uses the analogy of a symphony, which seems to be appropriate in an examination of the professional workplace, and viewing it as a developmental orchestration and harmonization leading to a symbolically-charged collective habitus. As in the workplace, within a symphony hierarchical relationships exist; at the same time as each person feels they are an important part of a creativity as a cooperative unit. Like the professional worker, this involves participation in the ritualistic or highly stylized contextual environment, whether the framework originates in the intensive understanding of occupational logic, or the intricacies of the score.

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[7] Some readers may be of the opinion that this closely-knit 'familial' workplace which I concentrated on was very unusual, or out of the ordinary. This may be, but is not necessarily the case. Hochschild (1997) interviewed a much larger sample of 130 people from a variety of workplaces, and arrived at an unanticipated conclusion, which supports the idea that workplaces in general, are becoming increasingly 'familial.' As he says, (1997:53,55) "I did not anticipate the conclusion I found myself coming to: namely, that *work has become a form of "home"* and home has become "work." The worlds of home and work have not begun to blur, as the conventional wisdom goes, but to reverse places." ."..as broken homes become more common - and as the sense of belonging to a geographical community grows less and less secure in an age of moblity - the corporate world has created a sense of "nieghbourhood," of "feminine culture," of *family at work*." [*emphasis mine*] (By "feminine culture" here, Hochscchild is using a narrow definiion, referring to a cultural *locale* in which females are, in his view, more empowered than in the "feminine culture" based in the average household.)

> To take up the musical metaphor again, the shift from domain to domain is like the shift from instrument to instrument in orchestral performance, each in their domain following the basic melody - the overall order of things in that culture - but each adding the different properties, the complementary qualities of their domain of expression. No instrument and no domain can "make music" alone, but performing together they create a vital - or ritualized - cosmological harmony...
> (Fernandez 1986:178)

The executive director of a specific workplace notes that the reason many other participants referred to the workplace in such personal terms as a 'family,' had to do with the high level of support there, along with quick integration of newly hired individuals. In terms of orchestration of agents, they were given the entire melodic 'scoresheet' quite quickly, and also encouraged to learn a variety of parts of it, in order to better understand how the 'parts' worked together to create the 'whole.'

> P. There was lots of support. It was the people in here, and that's part of the morale of the place too. When someone would come in new, they were immediately brought into the fold. And helped, and nurtured, and taught, by the more senior people. [In some workplaces] you get a newcomer that is sort of left to themselves, to learn by doing, or by the rules, that kind of thing didn't happen here. They were brought in, shown the ropes, they felt free to ask questions, mistakes were rarely made because they had enough confidence that if they had a difficult thing to handle, people would ask someone down the hall. It means an awful lot. And the people working here offered that support, completely.

This person notes the importance of his individual ability to 'orchestrate' a new department in a stylistic way that also represents personalization.

> P. The other thing that's interesting about it, is that because we are starting things from scratch, they're willing to spend money on some support systems. They gave me this junky old computer and a new one wasn't available but it's in next year's budget. So I'm wasting my time trying to learn an old program on an out of date computer that crashes all the time. "Can't we do something about getting me a new computer before May's budget?" So then they will spend two thousand dollars and

> get me the right box. I also have a component in my budget for training, and conference or anything like that and I'm in control of it where before I would have to rely on someone else for it. As a department head I can decide what's best for my department.

Along with the intensity of social relationships, support mechanisms, and the importance of meshing social and occupational interaction within the workplace, individuals are participating in a social 'production' each day. This harmonized 'production' is very symbolically significant, sometimes ritualistic, and contributes to the realization of collective habitus through social and occupational practice. All of these factors, seen as the most significant by my participants, can contribute to structured collective practice which can become so highly familiarized as to be taken for granted. The collective habitus and social dramas in the workplace may seem so 'normal,' especially after a decade or two in the same workplace, that individuals do not consciously think much about their own lifestyles and how they are integrated with their occupations.

[4a] Workplace Dynamics: So Familiar as to Become 'Self-Evident'

Bourdieu (1993:74-75) notes that the collectively understood parameters of practice in the collective habitus create the social and occupational intelligibility and familiarity that my participants spoke of. This means that, over time, this coherence and intelligibility can and usually does become situationally 'taken for granted.' In these cases, the workplace habitus is an integral part of what Bourdieu (1977:164) calls the perception that the "natural and social world appears as self-evident." He calls this situation "doxa," referring to a mode of thinking in which the level of intelligibility of the world one lives in is so strong that it becomes the 'natural' lifestyle. Even if other kinds of lifestyles are conceived of, after a while they are likely not thought of as particularly relevant alternatives.

In the strict sense of Bourdieu's concept of "doxa," which implies that the mode of thought does not even recognize alternative possibilities, it could not be applied here. However, most of my participants expressed extreme shock at being dislocated from the specific 'familial' field-related workplace, in the sense of never expecting this lifestyle change. It then seems appropriate to use the term "doxa" to describe the significant integration of the occupation, personal interests, specific workplace interactions and associated lifestyles in ways that often seemed 'untouchable,' or 'immune' to change.

This perception is more than 'taking something for granted.' It represents objectification of the past, present and future of an individual's development in the familiarity of the workplace. Because of the intense personalization of the workplace, many participants had the perception that their field, and they themselves, were 'immunized' by the necessary associated purpose of both, as this person indicates.

> R. With the layoffs, did your ideas about [unemployment] really change?
> P. Oh yeah, everybody's. I think that people started to realize that they were not irreplaceable. When you're in a government position you almost get to thinking that you're secure...

Upon unemployment, people had to get used to the realization that they and their field were not autonomous, which produced a strong sense of loss of security. As this person indicates, workplace position was, in all cases, highly integrated with similarly 'encoded' familiar or 'self-evident' lifestyles.

> P. And a new role, as far as just being home, you know, and not having this - plus getting used to the fact that we didn't have that income that I had brought in to depend upon - we always knew before that that would pay the rent, and groceries you know so we always knew we could cover that.

In the professional workplace, discourse constantly contributes to the objectification and thus the reality and realization of personalized interests and goals. It also contributes to feelings that this reality and realization is as natural as individuality and social interaction, and will continue 'forever.' This objectified reality takes on its own authority when workplace position becomes so highly familiarized and integrated with similarly familiar lifestyles, that together they produce a "self-evidence" through collective social reinforcement. As Bourdieu puts it, it is these "instituted discourses" which contribute to this sense of the world as natural and self-evident, precisely because there is so much personal investment involved in the production of institutionalized discourse and practice.

> The self-evidence of the world is reduplicated by the instituted discourses about the world in which the whole group's adherence to that self-evidence is affirmed. The specific potency of the explicit statement that brings subjective experiences into the reassuring unanimity of a socially approved and collectively attested sense imposes itself with the authority and necessity of a collective position adopted on data intrinsically amenable to many other structurations.
>
> (Bourdieu 1977:167)

It is more than the structuring of time, or the structuring of meaningful time that is involved here. It is the maintenance of a 'normality' that relates to all of the above considerations and more. As Goffman points out, the structure or parameters that we might think of as being particularly constraining, are part of the 'usual' world of the agents practising within them.

> Because obligations involve a constraint to act in a particular way, we sometimes picture them as burdensome or irksome things, to be fulfilled, if at all, by gritting one's teeth in conscious determination. In fact, most actions which are guided by rules of conduct are performed unthinkingly, the questioned actor saying he performs "for no reason" or because he "felt like doing so." Only when his routines are blocked may he discover that his neutral little actions have all along been consonant with the proprieties of the group...
>
> (Goffman 1967:49)

As one person noted, the workplace position and related lifestyle can become so 'natural,' that they may have supported the general idea of a need for cutbacks, assuming that they would not be the ones who would be affected.

> P. People like nurses and teachers are complaining now that they've been cut - but you ask those people who they vote for - ask them straight in the eye who they voted for, and what he said - and he told them what he was going to do Ralph told them, he was going to cut, he was going to balance that budget - how did they think? I'll tell you what I said to a chartered accountant I said "your husband and all those teachers thought "oh he would cut someone else" the liquor control people - "oh, he's going to cut teachers," the health care workers "oh he's going to cut civil service," and everyone made the assumption that they were irreplaceable.

Of course dominant ideology plays a large part in shaping individuality and determining what is considered 'normal.' However, in relation to the ways in which my participants expressed both their working and non-working experiences, it is the microscopic, highly personalized structure in the social/occupational world of the workplace-as-habitus which is centrally relevant. As Foucault puts it, structured discipline needs to be thought of as more than constraining, due to the need for consistency and a contextual 'norm' which provides a reference point from which to objectively realize individual position.

> In short, the art of punishment, in the regime of disciplinary power, is aimed neither at expiation, nor even precisely at repression. It brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal... The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes.*
>
> (Foucault 1977:183)

In Bourdieu's (1977:166) terms, lifestyle patterns can become so 'normal' or 'natural' for people that it is as if no other possibilities even exist. The following individual expresses an understanding of this kind of position.

> R. But in general, before the government cutbacks, you guys must have felt pretty secure about your jobs.
> P. Yeah well when we bought this house, I bought this house thinking that I had a secure future. Had I known then what I know now, I wouldn't have bought it, I would have stayed in the house that was almost paid for. Where we were comfortable for 17 years. So part of it was a status move, we wanted more room and we're, our family was actually getting smaller, so we really didn't need more space from that point of view, but our possessions and things like that were starting to flow out the windows.

All of my participants knew that alternative occupational lifestyles existed and were possibilities, but it was the experiential qualities of their own daily lives that were far more often taken for granted, due to extreme familiarity. One person expressed this as not realizing the significance of her position in the workplace until becoming displaced from it.

> P. I'm [unemployed] and I would - I always look at people you know, and I'm even walking home from the gym in the morning and they're all going to their offices and I'm thinking " I hope you guys are really thankful for your job" {laughs} *'Cause you don't realize what it is 'till you're out of it.*
> [*emphasis mine*]

This can be seen as part of the experience of "doxa," due to the high degree of integration of lifestyle expectations with objective (here, workplace-position related) situational possibilities and constraints, as Bourdieu explains.

> In a determinate social formation, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in the agent's dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of doxa, of that which is taken for granted. when, owing to the quasi-perfect fit between the objective structures and the internalized structures which results from the logic of simple reproduction, the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e. as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and

> therefore goes unquestioned, the agent's aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product.
> (Bourdieu 1977:166)

If we make a brief application of the workplace role in creating the state or experience of doxa that is described in the above quote, considering what I have presented in the above sections, it becomes obvious how relevant the collective workplace habitus is. As a collective and institutionalized habitus, the workplace can be seen as a type of "determinate social formation" (Bourdieu 1977:166). This person alludes to the way that the significance of the workplace may not be realized until workplace position is lost.

> P. Yeah, I didn't really realize it, 'cause you get, like everything else, you start taking it for granted, 'cause you come out here, you do, and you have fights with people, some drive you crazy or whatever, but then when it's all said and done, it's taken away, then you realize, you know, how much you did take it for granted - how much you really did, lean on that...

Another individual mentions that part of this 'taken for granted' characteristic of workplaces in Alberta is related to the fact that radical restructuring due to cutbacks had never occurred before, with such a sense of finality.

> P. I think that what you had said, that there were cuts starting 10 years ago, some places in Alberta I think that did happen - it didn't happen in Darkwater ever where you thought that this is going to last forever, and we're going to have to permanently downsize the organization, because we're not coming out of this spiral. *And that's what hit.*

This 'taken for granted' workplace and lifestyle position is also referred to, when looked back on, in terms of 'comfort' and 'complacency' by this person.

> P. I guess I'm the type that needs to be challenged all the time, and I was getting into too much of a rut, but, you know I - you know how we all, we get too comfortable, or I can just speak for myself - complacent, and then my personal life was very busy, and so just sort of overlooked it, you now, 'cause I know, if I wouldn't have got laid off, I'd probably still have been here in ten years - I know myself {laughs} - you just get, you just get too comfortable.

The workplace can be seen as the main habitus responsible for "stabilizing" field and lifestyle-specific values and goals, through the collective intelligibility, objective application and discourse that we find there. The workplace is a major influence in contributing to a high level of doxa, or what is taken for granted; at the same time the workplace habitus can be the centre of creative change and development.

One of the most important observations that can be made following an understanding of the possibility of taking for granted such an symbolically important collective habitus, has to do with discrepancies between expressed central values of work, and main dilemmas upon becoming unemployed. It is apparent that one of the most easily and commonly taken for granted aspects of the workplace is the structuring of daily time and activity. This is obvious in accounts of experiences of unemployment. At the same time, this kind of *time* structuring, as we have seen for most aspects of workplace structuring, may not be thought of much while working - it is the *deeper meanings* and the *personalization* of structure that is expressed as valuable when working. Linear time-structuring is easily 'dismissed,' until after becoming unemployed.

[4b] The Societally Mediatory Workplace: A Possibility of Communitas?

Along with the 'microcosmic' workplace setting, including the specific logic of the occupational field, the workplace is partly encapsulated, spatially, symbolically and interactionally. There is a significant daily 'removal' of the workers from the rest of societal 'structure.' As Bourdieu puts it, practice in any occupational field, always has a sort of mediating effect between the individual and the broader social structure.

> First, the external determinations that bear on agents situated in a given field (intellectuals, artists, politicians, or construction companies) never apply to them directly, but affect them only through the *specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field*, after having gone through a *re-structuring* that is all the more important the more autonomous the field, that is, the more it is capable of imposing its *specific logic*, the cumulative product of its particular history. Second, we can observe a whole range of structural and functional homologies between the field of philosophy, the political field, the literary field, etc., and the structure of social space (or class structure): each has its dominant and its dominated, its struggles for usurpation and exclusion, its mechanisms of reproduction, and so on. But every one of these characteristics takes a *specific, irreducable form in each field*....
>
> (Bourdieu 1992:105-106 [*emphasis mine*])

To members who identify strongly with the particular field, the workplace 'family' appears much less impersonal and quite distinct from the larger society. This property of the specific field-related workplace, of necessity being mediatory between agents practising within the field and the larger society, is strongly related to the possibility of the experience of communitas.

Communitas is, simply put, an emotive identification with community, made more significant to the extent that the group is autonomous, or *perceives itself as such*, from the larger social structure. Turner (1969:93) introduced the idea of communitas to describe the intense social bond and potential creativity possible among a group of initiates in the liminal stage of a transition rite, as they were collectively secluded from the larger society. As Turner first described communitas, it sounds very much like the intense coherence and feeling of homogeneity of the field-specific collective habitus described by Bourdieu (1992:105-106). With both the concepts of the collective habitus and communitas, the degree of homogeneity of collective purpose and practice is most salient, since very few social situations are without individual distinctions and hierarchical structures. Turner first intended communitas to refer to the common bond felt by people during transitionary liminal periods, when normative empirical secular societal structures were temporarily suspended. In the case of the specific professional workplace, it would be a perception of collective 'holism,' rather than an absolute absence of rank and hierarchical structure which is most significant. This would not be in complete disagreement with Turner's qualifications on the 'absence' of structure necessary for communitas.

> It is as though there are here two major 'models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as unstructured, or *rudimentarily* structured and *relatively* undifferentiated communitas, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders. I prefer the term "communitas" to "community," to distinguish this *modality of social relationship* from an "area of common living."
> (Turner 1969:96 [*emphasis mine*])

The main argument that I can see as supporting the possibility of experiencing communitas, is not the absence of rank and hierarchical arrangements, but the specificity and *different* substantive nature of these in the workplace as opposed to the mainstream society. Again, I refer to Bourdieu's (1992:105-106) observations of the mediatory, distancing effects of belonging to a specific field, in relation to normative societal structures. As well, the workplace setting can be seen as spatially, temporally and geographically set apart from the mainstream societal structures. Even considering this uniqueness of workplace structure in relation to larger society, it may well be that the *experience* of communitas is more highly related to symbolic meanings than to structure; to the meanings which are 'deeper' than empirical structuring. Workplace structure is highly symbolically-meaningful and individually personalized. Consider the following quote by Turner, in which he states that it is not the symbolically meaningful structure which he distinguishes from the realization of communitas.

> The term *gemeinschaft*, similar to "community" as used by Ferdinand Tonnies, combines two major social modalities which I distinguish, structure and communitas. By "structure' or "social structure" I do not mean what Levi Strauss or his followers mean by these terms, that is, a structure of "unconscious categories" located at a deeper level than the empirical, but rather what Robert Merton has termed "the patterned arrangements of role-sets, status-sets and status sequences" consciously recognized and regularly operative in a given society.
> (Turner 1977:201)

The social structure of "unconscious categories" located at a deeper level than what Turner refers to as the "empirical," are the kinds of categories which are the most salient ones regarding the symbolic meanings involved among agents practising within the specific field or workplace. In order for a conceptual consistency here, we have to acknowledge the salience of individual agency in the creation and interpretation of meaning, including that of workplace structure. Individual agency allows for a personalized conception of each person as an essential, as well as contributory member of a highly unified workplace 'family.' We can at least suggest, given the ways that people expressed their common bond in the workplace as more personal than community, that there is the *possibility* of these individuals experiencing something much like what Turner called communitas.

[5] Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have provided some of the aspects of the collective habitus of the specific workplace which make it an intensely personal context in many different ways. I have outlined the most important facets of the specific workplace that were expressed as valuable by my participants. These included the ways in which positions within the workplace hierarchy become personalized, which relates to a developed personalization of specific occupation as well as the workplace itself, as being a setting in which occupational principles are objectively applied in a unique way. Since so many of my participants used the analogy of the workplace 'family,' I have shown that this represents an extreme form of personal identification with this specific locale. The extreme familiarity of structured occupational and social practice and interaction within the specific workplace also contributes to workplace positions and associated lifestyles to become taken for granted, and not consciously thought about in many cases.

The purpose of this chapter is to clearly show the ways that the participants valued their occupational positions and workplace practice, and the ways in which both develop over time to become intensely personalized. In these ways the occupation and workplace 'family' becomes inextricably meshed with understandings of who the 'self' is, and what it constitutes. In essence, specific occupation and workplace become central factors contributing to *self*-perceptions of the individual habitus as socially-relevant.

This provides us with some understanding of the implications of becoming dislocated in a much more specifically-meaningful way than attempting a limited framing of the experience of unemployment as becoming a 'member' of the ideologically dichotomous and negative category of the unemployed in general, implying that there are only two categories; only black and white, so to speak. An in-depth examination of the personalized meaningfulness of specific work and workplace allows us to probe the 'grey' areas, within which we find most of our social selves to be 'located.'

Following drastic downsizing and layoffs, meaningful workplace structure, occupational purpose, the 'family unit,' and familiar positions that have become personalized in relation to each other, are all rendered 'obsolete.' I examine the effects of this in more depth from chapter seven on. In chapter six below, I outline some of the ways in which this workplace 'family' is distinctly gendered, (as are most biological families) again, using only that information which was expressed as the most relevant by my participants.

CHAPTER SIX:

THE GENDERED WORKPLACE 'FAMILY'

In this chapter I present some of the examples of the specific workplace as a gendered setting, following the experiences shown by my participants as the most important to them. The chapter is divided into three main sections, each with several sub-sections. In the first section, I outline some of the theoretical frameworks which are particularly relevant in relation to my interview data. Included in this section is an outline of some of the ways that workplace (like all social) positions are inherently gendered, which is part of the process of personalization of workplace position discussed in chapter five. In this section I also discuss some of the issues involving part-time work as related to household work including child raising. When individual agency and choice are taken into account, these issues are not as straightforwardly related only to oppression of women as they might seem.

In the second section I look at gender as it affects types and extent of social networking both within and outside of the specific workplace. I include positive as well as negative interpretations on the relative support of formal and informal networks. I also discuss faith in a 'personal relationship with God,' as narrated by some participants, as a form of 'network support.'

In the third section, I deal with the specific gendered relationships in the workplace. I include sections about male perceptions of working under a female, and various aspects of what I choose to call peripheralization of women through discourse. The discussion about peripheralization is highly related to this particular workplace, but examples such as the ones given in these sections could be seen as rather common, according to my participants as well as some of the research on this topic. I conclude this chapter by giving a short summary of how the information presented here supports the idea of the workplace as a 'family unit,' as well as showing this 'family' to be a gendered and patriarchal one in some ways.

[1] Some Complexities of a Gendered Economy and Workplace

As I have shown, the meanings of specific former workplace positions must be included in any examination of meanings of experiences of unemployment. It must also be recognized that perceptions of what jobs mean to people and what unemployment means are inherently gendered. Many studies have been devoted to examining aspects of a gendered labour market[6]. As Kelly states, gender is an organizing "force" in the macroscopic context of the western labour market, as well as in the structure of organizations.

> ... gender is used as an organizing force in the economy. Applying segmented labour market theory to the place of women in the economy reveals that gender is strongly related to the structure of occupations and industrial sectors. ...more discourse historically has proceeded as though economic structure is ungendered, based on universal classifications and gender-neutral categories.
> (Kelly 1991:30)

Babb notes that incorporation of gender issues is increasingly necessary in the field of economic anthropology.

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[6] Some of the studies used as background here include Kemp and Beck (1986); Nader (1986); Stevans et al (1987);Richer (1988); Babb (1990); Davies (1990); Mills (1990); Morgan and Knights (1991);van Vucht Tijssen (1991); Ashton and Sung (1992); Uchida (1992);Haynes and Jacobs (1994);Marchington et al (1994); Sklair (1995); Mortimer et al (1996); and Stevenson and Bartunek (1996). some of the better book-length studies on this subject include Ardener (1977); Kelly and Clegg (1982); Wilson (1986); Kelly (1991); Kendrigan (1991); Hage and Powers (1992) and Fineman (1993).

> Economic anthropology would benefit from more analyses that do not presuppose the centrality of men in all areas of economic and social life; that ask what activities women engage in and how these contribute to the maintenance of family and society; that question how decision-making and control of resources are allocated by sex as well as by class, ethnic affiliation, and so on; that examine cases of women's marginalization (e.g., exclusion from certain areas of work, relegation to the least remunerative positions, etc.) to see what material conditions and ideological supports allow for the perpetuation of inequality... and finally, that consider women as active agents in social and economic change.
> (Babb 1990:283)

As Richer points out, and is accepted in most studies; gendered socialization affects all areas of labour force participation.[3]

> Recent research on children's play reveals a very early pattern of gender differentiation. The mode is sex-segregated play practices, with boys engaging in physical, competitive and outdoor games, while girls tend towards non-physical and non-competitive activities in indoor settings. This is duplicated in the labour market in the phenomenon of occupational segregation. As I have commented earlier, 'What this evokes is a process of increasingly vertical differentiation of the sexes, begun in childhood and hardened and maintained throughout the life cycle.'
> (Richer 1988:98)

This "vertical differentiation of the sexes" means that, in general, women are socialized differently with reference to careers, and a growing number of them occupy the lower-paying positions, as Bourdieu notes.

> Sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon from its acidity; a class is defined in an essential respect by the place and value it gives to the two sexes and to their socially constituted dispositions. ...So the true nature of a class or class fraction is expressed in its distribution by sex or age, and perhaps even more, since its future is then at stake, by the trend of the

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[3] This research data is somewhat inconclusive. Mortimer et el (1996) find that gender-differences in socialization towards work-related values is decreasing in comparison with earlier studies. Consistent with Richer's view, however, Ashton and Sung (1992:16) found that the ongoing socialization in the workplace was by far the most heavily influenced by gender, which meant that females in any occupational category were far more likely than males to remain in the same category. Further, between 1976 and 1991, women have consistently accounted for 70% of total part-time work in Canada (Lero and Johnson 1994:4).

> distribution over time. The lowest positions are designated by the fact that they include a large - and growing - proportion of immigrants or women....
> (Bourdieu 1984:107-108)

Although this was not a common perception expressed by the women in my study, the following person believed that a woman taking care of the household full-time was a form of unemployment, *unless* she was also raising children. Her opinion indicates that a devaluation of household maintenance as work still exists, even among younger females.

> P. I'm remembering when my sister first got married and they moved to a small town. Her husband taught school, and there was no job for her there, and she was just at home and they had just got married, so they weren't going to have kids right away, and she said she'd get up, have breakfast with their husband and then go back to bed because she had nothing to do. And she had been working full-time in the city before they got married, and so it was the same thing as just being unemployed, and...
> R. That's interesting, because you are seeing similarities between being unemployed and being a housewife with no children.
> P. That's right, and I think part of that goes to the fact that, uh, if OK if you're gonna be on a farm or something where you have to still keep working and there's a lot of demands on you through the whole summer, but for the rest of the time, what do you do? And you have to fill your life with other activities.

Harris and Braddock found that the same kinds of variables affected both men and women, in a study of a plant closure:

> While gender had a main effect on several variables including psychological well-being, the magnitude was fairly small. Cognitive appraisals, administrative support and attachment, however, were highly correlated with well-being, and there were some gender differences for these variables. Gender did not appear to moderate the relationship between psychological health and its determinants.
> (Harris and Braddock 1988:391)

Studies in economic anthropology concentrating on gender as a factor among the working or unemployed, or at any level of analysis of the labour market or global economy, often result in unexpected conclusions. For example, studies intending to show that gender is a primary causal variable may discover that gender does not appear to be a very significant variable at all, (e.g. Harris and Braddock 1988) and vice versa. However, contradictions in social science are inevitable by-products of differing methodologies as well as differing social situations, contextual variation, and interpretive license. Gender-awareness remains fundamental to research in economic anthropology at all levels of social structure, as Babb notes.

> I have argued that gender is critical to our analysis in economic anthropology whatever our "unit" of study may be.... Many of the questions we desire to examine will require that we consider broader, and interlinking, units of analysis. But what remains constant is the differential experience of men and women at every level of analysis.... as anthropologists, we have a responsibility not only to produce useful research but to identify, discuss, and sometimes confront, those issues that affect most directly the lives of the people we study. Gender, as the basis for one of the most persistent forms of inequality cross-culturally, deserves our serious attention.
>
> (Babb 1990:292-293)

In a study of 'lower middle-class' occupations in Britain and Germany, Lane (1987) notes a similar situation based on gender. She shows that gender-based differences are not primarily economic in nature, but fundamentally cultural and ideological. Martin points out that cultural ideology which still stresses male domination, is mirrored in organizational ideology, processes and structure.

> ...there are various ways in which male domination is maintained in bureaucracies and professions. Overt discrimination against women is the most obvious way. This is made possible by control of the top decision-making positions by men. Secondly, external support systems for employees are biased against women. Since women continue to carry most of the burden of housework and childcare, most women are doing 'double duty' compared to men, especially those who have the support of wives for these tasks. Thirdly, organizational styles usually favour those with personal characteristics which are typically masculine, such as aggressiveness or competitiveness. Women who do not behave this way are not deemed as suitable material for promotion, while women who do behave this way are denigrated as not behaving appropriately for their sex. Finally, the gendered division of labour excludes most women from opportunities to rise,,,
>
> (Martin 1987:439)

Gendered societal ideology forms the background for understanding narration of specific gendered workplace experiences. My focus is much more limited, although the purpose of this chapter is to recognize some ways in which ideological gender distinctions are internalized in workplace organization and experiences, as Lane clearly shows.

> ....gender structures the labour process and market situation of all employees. Women predominate the lower grades of the hierarchy, have limited promotion prospects, and are more severely affected by the negative impact of new technology....men retain their traditionally high promotion chances at the expense of women. ...Men's advantage over women is not merely a consequence of their superior qualification but is ideologically founded.
>
> (Lane 1987:73-74)

Gendered workplace positions must be seen as affecting job satisfaction prior to becoming unemployed, which is an important variable in the experience of unemployment. For example, Little did a study in 1976 and found that unemployment could constitute a sort of "release" for some middle-class workers, depending on the degree to which they had valued and found satisfaction in their previous jobs.

> ...the respondent had been having doubts about whether he was in the right field prior to being laid off. Open-ended portions of the interviews with many men revealed that they felt trapped by their previous jobs. They desired to quit and reorient their careers but the risk of abandoning a good salary and what appeared to be a good job security were too great. Being laid off, therefore, made a decision for them that they had considered but had been unable to consummate before.
>
> (Little 1976:266)

Relative job satisfaction depends on many things, including individual characteristics and values, as well as characteristics of the job itself, whether perceived or objective. As the authors of one study put it.

> While the importance of individual characteristics for job satisfaction cannot be neglected, a review of the literature in this area suggests that it is structural or job-related characteristics that are the most critical in producing satisfied workers. A

> large variety of job characteristics, including organizational attributes, (e.g. organizational level, size of subunit, size of total organization), job-control factors (e.g. degree of specialization and convenience) economic and social factors, promotional opportunities, and hours of work have been examined for their contributions to job satisfaction. ...Jobs with high internal rewards offer such benefits as autonomy, control, and interesting and challenging work, while those with high external rewards provide high wages, fringe benefits, and job security.
> (Hanson, Martin and Tuch 1987:288)

The results of this study reinforce much of the previous research on relative job satisfaction,[4] in participants' expressions of characteristics of work that constituted main job-related values; some of these were directly affected by the gendered workplace.

[1a] Gendered Role Recognition in the Workplace

There is compelling evidence that women's earning potential in the labour force is still viewed as rather 'secondary' compared to that of men, even with the vast increase in women's participation in the labour force (e.g. Morris 1987). One male professional discussed his philosophy regarding women and the need for dual-income households. There are several indications here that female work is both valued and at the same time seen as secondary, or in the other case situation described, seen as threatening to the unemployed male. The female spouse's options, given the following observations, seem to be pretty limited, and highly related to male expectations and idiosyncrasies.

> P. His wife went out then and got a part-time job, then a full-time job at a Dairy Queen, and she's still working there, and that just kind of lifted him, just enough

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[4] Different case studies usually concentrate on a narrow set of specific variables. For example, Eichar and Thompson (1986) undertook an examination of alienation among workers. In this study, relative alienation was measured by corresponding it with low levels of worker autonomy, complexity of the work and variety of the tasks performed (1986:47). There is much research showing that women occupy a very different position in several key areas, including the capitalist labour market process and structure (Alonso 1992; Davies 1990; Babb 1990), corporate organization related to power and merit (Morgan and Knights 1991; Peterson 1989; Burton 1987), patterns of career paths (Ashton and Sung 1992; King 1989), and still, of course, in the relative wages between men and women for the same jobs (e.g. Kemp and Beck 1986).

> that it changed his attitude towards her in a sense and made it more positive, 'cause she had a job. [Unemployment] can also cause big problems if you're used to the big bucks, you go down and the wife turns around and gets 2 or 3 promotions. And she starts treating you the wrong way or you perceive things - I mean there's whole psychological games here that are just - there's really touchy stuff going on. Other cases, where the wife - I'm just using that side of it, OK - where the wife did not work, did not get a job, did not really want to get a job, the husband had lost his job, - the downward spiral sets in - I think it mushrooms on them real quick - emotionally, financially, physically, the whole works, just spirals right in on them. And that's really tough to see, but that's what I have observed. So I'm lucky - *my wife has her little business.* [*emphasis mine* - his spouse owned two profitable health-care businesses at the time, but he referred to them as if they were a 'hobby']

One woman discussed her perception that secretarial work was not recognized as important in the same way as the professional 'male-dominated' occupations. She felt that her becoming unemployed was similarly not recognized as very significant.

> P. The part of it that was hard to adjust, you do feel that you're lost in the shuffle - you feel like you had this position, it wasn't like you were any bigwig over there, you were a secretary and you made a lot of things go there, but they don't seem to recognize, they're feeling sorrier for the big fellows, you know, they had a big income and they lost a big chunk of money, but it's just that, it's that I miss it just as much as they do, but it's not like you're recognized for that, you know? So you go back and visit people and it's like, you know, your happy life is just going on but they don't realize what pressures you're under as well. That there's just as much pressure with me losing my job as there is with any of the other fellows over there.

The usually lower position of women in the professional workplace could be a slight advantage when cutbacks occur, as one former part-time working woman noted below. However, this did not seem to ease the trauma she felt upon becoming unemployed; although it seemed to contribute to her perception that the support staff were not as highly valued. Paradoxically, the fact that she was kept on longer during the layoffs was seen as both a financial advantage, and at the same time as an indication of her low status in the workplace.

> P. They did keep me longer, but probably because I didn't make that much either,

> you know, they could keep me longer just because the chunk I took out of the iceberg was not that big - it was the heavier-weights that they were trying to get rid of, they did do that at first, but um, I don't know, I don't think that secretaries are valued as much as they should be most of the time, 'cause really they, you're pretty valuable actually. When I think of who's left in there, she's very valuable to them, boy you know, she makes the office work in a lot of ways, what would they do without her?

Another woman expressed her feelings of sometimes not really even 'being there' from the kind of indicators she felt from some of the males.

> P. They'll just kind of look at you, and look right through if you say something and I just figure "why do you have to be that way?" It can make you sad, I mean there's no doubt, or it can make you very angry.

When it began to look like the entire workplace would not have to shut down completely, it was the female support staff that organized a meeting, and offered to take on additional duties which would have formerly been delegated to higher-paid professionals. This clearly showed that they could accomplish many tasks which were not part of their job description. It also indicates that they may have been doing many of these duties beforehand, as well as their being primary motivators in, and contributors to the familial workplace atmosphere.

> P. We had a staff meeting one day, and a few of us just said, you know, what can we do? And this is when we were talking about that it was really going to go , we're going to be working, can't you delegate stuff so we can get this on line, we need to down-scale this and you know, to make this more productive. And we had a really good staff meeting where the support staff said let us help out here. And it seemed there was a turn around then, especially with our director, she just said "Oh you really want to help," that sort of thing. And she started delegating some things to us and everybody felt that they had something to do, at least with the support staff, we all had way more responsibilities and I think that's why we have way more productivity.
>
> So you know, we have staff meetings every week now and she is more open with us, she tells us everything that she knows, uh what is going on instead of us waiting for the minutes of the executive meetings that would tell us something. That's the way it was before. But sitting down with her regularly, everybody is

fully aware and everybody knows as much as she knows.

Another female, working in a male-dominated architectural office, noted that a disquieting aspect of this had to do with her perceptions that they may have "expected" less of her, due to her gender. She could not resolve this, since she did not know "for sure" if the perception of lowered expectations was due to her sex, or her recent entrance into the workplace. However, a male in such a workplace would not have these same doubts.

> R. When you were the only woman in the first year, did you ever feel anything, that had to do with your gender?
> P. Well, when I took the job there was an architect that had taught us a course at school, and he was the one that had recommended me for the position, 'cause he knew the engineer, and he had said to me "Yeah, I think they need a woman in there to shake things up a bit (laughs). I noticed that, when I first started working there they were fairly reserved, and, as they got to know me, and knew that I appreciate humour and stuff, things loosened up a bit in the office, so I think part of what they felt was that their little...man's domain was being invaded by this woman. I never was harassed in any way, they were all real nice guys, and, uh, the only thing I noticed was that I don't think they have the same expectations of me as they would have of a guy. As far as, in terms of how much work I could do, how much I could learn - because they would hand me things to work on and I'd be done and hand it back to them and they'd go "what, you're done already?" Wow, well OK, let me find you something else to do.
> R. And you think that might have had something to do with because you're a woman?
> P. Well, I, I don't know, you know I guess you can't ever say for sure - was it because I was a woman or because I was just a student out of school, first job that I'd had since I graduated? I'm not sure, like, they never made me feel that, I couldn't do it, they just seemed surprised I could do it as well as I did.

Later in this chapter, I will show some striking examples of doubts and concerns which had to do with male discourse directed at women. In the next section, I briefly mention a few main issues having to do with the dual role of women in the household and public workplaces.

[1b] Part-Time Work and the Household

Among the participants in this study, it was obvious that women valued their positions to much the same degree and for the same reasons as the men, and expressed the family-like workplace atmosphere similarly. There was strong evidence of a gender-segregated workplace, with women holding all of the lower-paid "support-staff" or clerical positions.[5] As well, the entirely female support-staff were spatially-segregated near the entrance to the workplace, in highly visible locations, while the occupational professionals had private offices far from the entrance.

The executive director and several of the professionals, however, were also women, so the workplace was not entirely biased towards only men holding the higher-status positions. Also, the part-time positions were exclusively held by women, usually ones who were raising children. All but three of the women interviewed were part of dual-income households, and through their narrations it became apparent that they were doing most of the household work.[6] They expressed the flexibility of this workplace as a central value, as well as asserting that part-time jobs were their specific choices. However, in most of the cases, these choices were directly related to their commitment to child raising responsibilities. I do not have the information necessary to determine whether these women worked part-time because they had to, because of heavy financial pressures coupled with household and family responsibilities, or whether this represented a 'free choice' based around their values particularly towards child raising. This remains a highly contentious and difficult question. On one hand, even the 'choice' related to familial values could be related to patriarchal socialization, and the lack of participation by males in the household. On the other hand, we cannot fall into the theoretical dilemma of denying the individual agency of women. Female participants in this study generally expressed the considered opinion that an identity based wholly within the workplace was *not* a good idea, nor one based solely within the home. Their part-time work was thought to represent a kind of balancing of these two ends of a spectrum, as this woman indicates.

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[5] Although this is not a simple issue, most studies associate the carrying of most household and familial responsibilities by women in dual-income households to be a major factor in lower wages for women and occupational segregation in the workplace. The concept that women 'should' be the main unpaid household workers is likely the most important characteristic of the more macroscopic gendered economy and labour force ideologies, in affecting women's positions, as shown by Lero and Johnson (1994:17-23). This is looked at briefly in following pages as well. Some particularly contributory studies used to frame this brief discussion include Barret and McIntosh (198?); Downey and Moen (1987); Morris (1987); Peterson (1989); Cornfield, Cavalcanti Filho and Chun (1990);Aryee and Luk (1996) and Cook and Beaujot (1996).

[6] Even though women's levels of participation in the paid labour force is as high as men's, Lero and Johnson (1994:17-23), using data from Statistics Canada, found that "78% of women in Canada had sole responsibility for meal preparation, and in 66% of households with two spouses, women had sole responsibility for meal clean-up. 77% of women were also solely responsible for household cleaning and laundry. In all Canadian households, (both single and dual earning ones) 70% of mothers with children under age 19 are involved in primary child-care activities on a daily basis, compared with 46% of fathers. 95% of women with children under age 5 provide primary childcare on a daily basis, compared with 69% of men. Averaged over a 7-day week, women spend 2.3 hours per day on primary childcare, compared to 1.6 hours for men."

> P. Yes, and because of the flexibility here I can work two days a week, but I put in twenty hours at least, which is something they allow here. I'm really on a three day contract, but because I don't want to leave the children at home that much they've allowed me to choose my own hours because I don't have to deal with the public on a daily basis. I feel better and [my children] like me better, and I'm only gone two days a week and that's enough of a break for them too.
> R. Well, in fact, several [women] with children of that age have worked here for a couple a days a week felt it was a good break for them too.
> P. Yeah, yeah this isn't work compared to what we do at home.

On the other hand, the males who became unemployed and found themselves working in the household, often had perceptions that they were peripheralized and stigmatized by doing this kind of activity. This is a problem for the affected males, but it also shows that the males perceive that household work is considered as socially 'improper' for them, and thus a somewhat marginal kind of work. This person notes the 'backwardness' in social perceptions of 'role-reversals,' but he also indicates that, in his opinion, the children preferred to have the mother at home, which is a common justification for restriction of the female to the household sphere, and part-time employment.

> P. It's funny that in the 90s there's such a problem with [role reversals]. It still seems like there is. I've always helped, at home, but I think the kids liked having the mother, 'cause she's less strict, on some things. But my son and I are getting along really well now.

[1c] Positive Role Objectification, Working and Child Raising

A mother of several young children notes that although she found child raising to be purposeful and productive work, she found her role in the professional workplace particularly valuable for three main reasons. First she highly valued the interaction, and networking with *adults*. Second, it was an opportunity to be back in her professional area; after six years of full-time child raising, she thought she might have become unemployable. Third, she valued the flexibility of this particular workplace, which allowed her to work part-time and continue to be fully involved with her children.

> P. Well having been at home for 6 years before with kids, I think the first couple of years, I was like, thrilled just to be out and talking to adults. Doing adult stuff. Yeah it was great, and being it was just part-time it wasn't, um, a struggle - like that was the other thing I really liked about the job is that it was part-time, and they were really flexible to your needs when you had kids - I was able to change my hours. The last year I was here just, um, so that I could be home earlier, because my kids had other activities that I had to get them to and stuff and they didn't mind me coming in - it didn't affect things really so they said "sure, I could come in earlier in the day and go home early if I wanted." And, I don't know, it was a challenge and it was my own career and I thought I would never... work it again after being out of it for 6 years, you know I thought I'd probably never get back in.
> R. Plus it was directly the thing that you had trained for?
> P. Yeah, and I really liked this kind of drafting - 'cause I'd worked in other areas, here and there, short term, I didn't like it at all - the mechanical type drafting. I

> really liked this kind - so that , you know I really liked that, and uh, plus you got, 'cause I was there part-time, I don't know why that worked out but I got to go out in the field more and stuff.

Even though this person, and many other female participants who were raising children, had significant network contacts based around those positively objectifiable activities, they were quite clear about the difference and desirability of networks related to employment and occupational roles in the workplace.

It seems that the field-related mediatory effects noted in chapter five, including a partial daily 'removal' from the outside social world, allows for a self-objectification based on more specific abilities, incorporating more specifically-developed adult interests. The workplace remains the locus for a distinctly 'adults-only family,' and this is a large part of the reason that women with children find a particular value in the kind of social interaction and practice there. This indicates that the social world outside of the office is much more heavily geared towards child-raising and household maintenance duties and obligations for the women that it is for the men. Further, the women appreciate the value of these activities, while also viewing them to various degrees as constraining, so that the adult office work and interaction is often seen as a form of 'release,' in that it allows them to objectify their adult interests, and in fact to authenticate themselves as adults.

[2] Gender and Social Networking

Social networking is essentially the opposite of the widely-reported self-isolation among middle-class unemployed (Burman 1988; Newman 1989). Studies have shown a marked gender-based difference on the use and nature of social networking among the unemployed (e.g. Callender 1987). Women are generally seen as having much more extensive social networks outside of the workplace than men do. A higher degree of social networking is generally assumed to increase job satisfaction, as well as modify trauma upon unemployment. My research showed the former to be true, and that social interaction was an essential part of workplace experience, even though (and possibly because) it was gender-divided.

Participants were much more vague about whether social networking modified the degree of trauma upon unemployment. They often found social networks outside of the workplace to be a source of support as well as a source of stigmatization and misunderstandings. The women with children, in my limited sample, did have a significant advantage by being part of established social networks outside of the office. This had to do with the fact that most of them belonged to social networks that revolved around child raising and associated extra-workplace activities. (see Gullestad 1984). Being involved in these extra-workplace networks reinforced a strong identity as primary caregivers. This meant that upon becoming unemployed, women did not have all of their identities invested in workplace roles. This did not necessarily mean that these more extensive social networks were always viewed as more supportive than stigmatizing, however. There was a great difference between networking while employed, and networking while unemployed, and this may be attributed to the fact that most of these networks consisted of women who were both the primary caregivers in the household, *and* held jobs in the public sphere.[7]

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[7] Lero and Johnson (1994:2) that in 1991, 68% of all mothers with children under the age of six, also held full-time jobs. They also mention (1994:12) that, in 1988, "both parents were employed in 58% of two-parent families with children under the age of thirteen." This pattern seems to have contributed to a new ideology,

[2a] Networking Without Workplace Position

It is obvious that the collective habitus experienced in the workplace included the most supportive and extensive form of social networking. For the majority of male and female individuals, their most significant networks, excepting close relatives, were within the workplace. That most of the social networking revolved around daily office interaction, was a strong factor, in perceptions of distinct value there, and the associated high level of trauma upon being removed from the workplace setting.

Unlike most, the following person was aware that she should consciously try not to place all her positive self-identity within the workplace. This was very helpful in modifying her trauma when unemployed. Even though she was single and had no children, she developed important interests and activities outside the workplace. She had been advised to do this, in a workshop about a year before her unemployment.

> P. They had pointed out [in the workshop] that the people who have all of their identity vested in the job, and they have no other options in mind, no idea what they would do [without the position] are really at a loss upon unemployment. And he said people who have plan A, plan B plan C in mind, even if they don't necessarily act on them, have got some other options thought through a bit, usually are a little better off. And I do have several ideas that I've been pursuing, basically just to find another job, but I had considered going back to school, and exploring a bit. So that has helped too, to know that 'all is not lost.'

This person was very much an exception, since she had prepared psychologically, and at least begun pursuing other options, well before her lay-off. As well, she had a very active life in her church organizations, along with her life at work. This is an example of an

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which stresses that females 'should' both be the primary caregivers, and hold at least part-time jobs, which means that 'unemployed' primary caregivers can be stigmatized in much the same way as any unemployed person, since their networks consist of so many working mothers.

individual who did not seem to 'take her position for granted,' in the way that most of my participants seemed to. This person worked to create a perception of her own options which acted very much as a support mechanism upon unemployment. The next participant illustrates the necessity for informal network support. In this case, he associates the lack of support with such things as ethnic and occupationally-specific segregation, and his inability to activate networks and become re-employed.

> P. {laughs} but in these economic times, social environment here in southern Alberta, I suspect it's tougher than,... I mean I know it is, than I'd say larger cities - the small towns here are, demographically, as you know, predominantly of one particular religion or cultural group or another, and if you don't belong to that cultural group and have no relations in that school teaching, sorry, you don't get in that door.

The availability of various kinds of social support mechanisms *outside of the workplace*, usually involving networking of some sort, is generally agreed as modifying the severity of felt trauma, as well as greatly increasing the individual's chances of re-employment. However, as I've indicated, participants in this study, when unemployed, had a great variety of interpretations of networking, and not nearly all of it was positive.

[2b] Positive and Negative Interpretations on Networking

This person describes both positive and negative aspects of network support. Sometimes the positive feedback is not perceived as entirely positive by the unemployed person; there can be a sense of 'misdirected' empathy, as well as increased pressure.

> P. ... some of the feedback, they try to give you very positive feedback, at a time when you don't want positive feedback. It's like well, you know, ah, I have a friend who talked about such and such, and maybe you should phone him and, he was going on about this and while that's a positive suggestion, it's totally unrelated to anything you want to do. It's hard to say well I'm not interested in that because... it's a job!, and you should consider it.

In the following case, networking could improve the person's ability to work again, but could also contribute to accepting underemployment. This woman went from working as an engineer to working in a daycare (she was fully trained for both). Callender (1987) found in her study of networking among women, that women tended to network more efficiently than men. However, she also observed that the jobs women found through these networks were generally in the lower-paying sectors, compared to the jobs that men found through less extensive networking. This woman felt that her personal preferences, interests, and even abilities were not respected in networking attempts to find her work. The network 'help' included giving her the perception that she was not doing enough herself to find work.

> P. It's a little tough, because while you need to rely on other people to get information on jobs that are out there, if it's something totally unrelated to what you do,... like I even heard, since having a job, someone else say that they were trying to get me into their office to be their receptionist, because I'd be "good with people up front." Well, I don't type very well, I know nothing about word-processing, not enough to be a receptionist in a busy office, and I thought, boy, if you had offered this to me, what would I have done, I don't even know if I could have said yes, because I'm not qualified for this type of work, sort of a pity offer, you know. So it's interesting, uh, there was some of that, there was the, I think feelings from people that you aren't doing enough to find work...that you're running around and spending all your time doing things that are fun for you but they're not finding a job. It was hard on my relationship with my fiancé at the time, because he kept saying "did you call anyone, have you done anything?" Then you start to know how people who have been unemployed for a long time feel.

The pressure from the fiancé and others mentioned here are very consistent with the spousal pressures that Newman (1989:5) observed, showing that it is both males and females who are susceptible to this kind of pressure.

> But on too many occasions, it seemed that her rage over the unfairness of his plight was mixed with doubt. She would bombard him with questions: Did you follow up on this lead? Did you call your cousin Harry about another? What did

> the headhunter tell you about that job downtown? David had few satisfying answers and after a while began to resent the questions.
> (Newman 1989:5)

This unemployed professional male talks about the dualistic aspects of network contacts, showing that male professionals can experience the same kinds of perceptions as do many females. In this case, the person was irritated by these comments, and this tended to cause avoidance of interaction. At the same time, he noted that people whom he had not thought of as part of his support network could be the most positively supportive.

> P. And that's the other thing - running into people - was - sort of embarrassing you know because with me they'd always be asking about my health plus they were wondering if I found a job "what are you doing now" and you hear it so many times that if you see someone you know you almost want to turn and go the other way - they say "what are you doing now" and they look you in the eye to see have you been trying "oh my brother was laid-off last week and he's got 3 job offers." You get that a lot, - but you do find out who your friends are - where the real support is like ah, when I left there, at the County building there were certain people that I talked with and I thought, they're basically more than an acquaintance - when they give you that card, uh, and the little gift, um, a lot of them just ... put the name on...maybe "good luck" - but the ones that wrote something were people you didn't even expect, you know like "hey, you want to stop by," or "hope you have some good fortune" or whatever, and ah, "let us know how things are going"

Considering the above material, there is a suggestion that network support people, who feel close enough personally to the unemployed individual to express themselves without hesitation, may be causing more pressure and resentment than they are aware of. It is also likely that the unemployed person may have unrealistic expectations of these same people. However, social support could also be very highly valued. This person was extremely surprised and impressed by the amount of social support she found within networks that she didn't apparently even think much about while working. This support seemed to make a large difference since she tended towards self-blame, as did most of my participants.

> P. ... and one of the most surprising things was how much support there was - the phone rang off the hook for 2 days -- there were flowers, there were calls, there were, you know people saying they were shocked, they couldn't understand it. And people who knew, who knew,... how much my job had meant to me. Even though they couldn't understand living the way I'd lived. Were, were very sympathetic, and knew that I had to be devastated. And were there, right now, and, ah...trying very hard to tell you that it's not your fault. Which you can't believe. And which I still don't believe.

The person quoted above viewed the support responses in a highly contextualized way, acknowledging both the uniqueness of her specific workplace position, and the field-related coherence. Since field-specific problems could not really be grasped by 'outsiders,' this also explained a perceived lack of support in the first stages of restructuring, by people not knowing how to respond.

> R. When you talk about all the support you got from people, and the kind of support you get, it sounds like they treated you almost like you were in the hospital.
> P. Uh...yeah but in an emotional hospital
> R. So you appreciated that kind of stuff?
> P. Yeah, because when the restructuring happened 2 years before, nobody... talked to me... and, and... it came out, over time, that nobody knew what to say. And some people didn't.... didn't grasp the structure, or the significance. Because you have to kind of be a middle manager to, to get hung up on management structures, and really understand what it means. But some people knew that things had changed, and that I wasn't happy, but they... it's like not quite knowing.... do we talk to her, is she going to... break down? Is she going to bawl her eyes out, right in front of us? Um... very few people knew what to say, 'cause I was... the walking wounded, but it wasn't a physical... hurt. It wasn't "Oh I'm sorry you broke your leg kind of thing - I'll help you carry your briefcase." Very few people knew how to approach it. But by the time it happened, and it was actually a termination, partly it was easier 'cause they didn't see me all the time. 'Cause I wasn't still physically there looking... hurt. And... so... I think it's easier for people to do something over the phone. Partly it's because everybody had gone through this before with a whole bunch of other people so they knew how badly people hurt. So they knew - "I've got to do something." And partly 'cause I think most people were really surprised.

A great deal of informal social networking and support was found within the specific workplace, as has been discussed in the context of the collective workplace habitus in chapter five. Further, much of the social networking outside of the workplace also revolved around the occupational practice and included others *within* the workplace.

[2c] Networking and the Importance of Occupational Context

The following individual, unemployed after 21 years in the same workplace, shows the integration of non-work and work-related socializing in on-the-job social networking.

> P. The coffee thing in the morning was a combination of business and pleasure both, because we'd sit down and, like you and I are talking right now, and, sometimes the hockey scores or whatnot would get into the conversation, but normally we'd talk about what was happening with our families and what was happening with work - it was all kind of mixed together - and then usually what would interrupt the situation is one of us would get a phone call, and it would be back to issues for the public or whatever.

As in the previous sections, we have seen that the field-related workplace is also a highly social context, in which a lot of the daily networking occurs. This can also be support networking, especially during times of rapid restructuring, as the following person remembers.

> P. And nobody knew... who was going to be next. And so... there was sympathy and there was support and it was very positive for me, but they knew, they knew they were part of this too. And they needed to talk. The ones that were also employed at the city - the ones from outside and all kinds of contacts... called, or came, or whatever, or made a point of talking to me the next time they saw me and, and they were, you know, some were making suggestions about jobs, and some were just very kind about just asking how I was doing, you know, and making it clear they, they were prepared to talk if I wanted to talk they weren't just saying... how are you... they were being sympathetic about how they did it. So there was more support there than I ever thought, that there would be.

As this person describes, networking outside of the workplace can be highly related to 'position' as well. In this case, the workplace position provides a basis for network positions outside of the workplace, as the following individual notes.

> P. It surprised me that some of the people made the effort to call, because they weren't people I considered personal friends, they were work colleagues for a long time, and that really was touching - they were people that have never called here before, and who I only talked to about work things, at work. They weren't 'friend' friends.

Many individuals are no longer able to occupy positively objectifiable positions within societal network associations after becoming unemployed, since the interaction in these extra-workplace networks still often revolves around occupational interests or work in general. One exception to this seems to be the women who are raising children, who have more significantly developed extra-workplace networks, and retain a positive objectifiable role outside of the workplace.

It was very apparent in my interviewing, that gender-segregation in the workplace is a more complex issue than sometimes presented in studies that take a single theoretical approach. It is also too complex to be appropriately dealt with using such a small sample of participants as were used in this study. Although the workplace was gender-segregated, with all the obviously negative implications briefly outlined in above sections, the gender-segregation had some positive elements as well. With all the support staff working in such close proximity, and all female, many with small children, there was a significant aspect of homogeneity of interests there, which incorporated occupational and family interests, similar experiences and responsibilities. This was expressed by participants as contributing to the intense familiarity and social interactivity. At the same time, the support staff knew how important their roles were to the collective purpose of the institution, and this was reinforced through solidarity and feedback among themselves, even if not fully appreciated by the occupational professionals.

This intense social interaction was also occupationally-reinforcing and revolved around workplace roles, so that it was not easy for these people to find such a feeling of common purpose in any other adult setting outside of the workplace. It is recognized that this role-reinforcement between female members of the lower-paying and less highly regarded positions has to contribute to what could be called a repressive segregation. On the other hand, if females are to be given credit as active agents in their own right, their occupational positions also have to be seen as at least partly dictated by personal choice. These positions would be much more desirable as choices, if they were recognized as essential, and not predominantly as 'secondary,' and if this recognition would be reflected in higher pay and status.

[2d] Faith: 'Networking' With God - Never Alone and Less 'Workplace-Dependent'

The following professional woman described her workplace position as constituting about "half her identity"; the other half relating to her involvement in the church.

> P. I um, I would like to think, and people looking at it from outside may see it differently, but I think it was about 50-50. I've always been very active in my church, and I have a whole other set of friends and associations and activities there, so between that and my work that's my whole identity.

Only two participants mentioned that their church was an important source of support, although many more of them did attend church. Both of the participants who mentioned church activity as supportive and central were women. With regard to the modifying effect on trauma, these individuals regarded their Christian faith as being centrally important. This faith included a network consisting of other members of their church, but as this woman put it, it was their belief in a 'one-to-one relationship with Christ' that had a specific modifying effect on the traumatic feelings of isolation experienced by most unemployed individuals. She expressed her state as one of transition, in her own words, but it was not felt to be a threatening or ambiguous transition in the same ways as expressed by others (see chapter ten).

> P. It really all comes back to my faith, since I have a really strong sense that the Lord's going to be with me somewhere, and I don't know where or when, but I know I'm not going to be abandoned. It's still a transition, but it's more that you know that you're not alone in this, and you can ask for guidance and you will get it. One thing that I worry about is that I don't want to get into the trap of thinking that I don't have to do anything, and the Lord will just 'drop something in my lap' or something. So I make a real conscious effort to look into different opportunities.

The next person described it as a 'blessing from the Lord,' when she unexpectedly realized that she had less debt than she had thought. What we might categorize as 'poor budgeting' reinforces the individual's belief that the Lord is looking after them, and they're not alone, having daily personal interaction with God. As with all perceptions, the individuals' interpretation has a validity of its own. This can also directly meliorate financial stress, as this person interprets her giving of tithes to be a literally reciprocal monetary process.

> P. What happened to me which was a real blessing was I was pretty worried for a bit, 'cause I'd never really figured it out what I was going to get [going from her severance pay to UIC] so when I finally did figure it out, I didn't have very much to live at the end of the payments, it was about $25! And I went to phone the credit union to tell them I didn't have enough to pay my car payment. And they told me, "you know you only have $800 left to pay on your car loan." So that was wonderful, that gave me that doorway I needed that I didn't even know was there. ... and I'm a tither, and the first thing that comes off my UIC is my church tithe, and one person told me that if you are a tither, the Lord will take care of you, and I'm sure seeing that. It just blows my mind. I know that God is blessing me for blessing Him. And now I can stay in my apartment, where I couldn't have before. People might think I'm crazy for thinking that, but I don't care, because I've seen the result. And I needed money this week, I wanted to give someone $20, and they

> needed it, and then there came a phone call, and someone gave me $40, so there was money for her, and $20 for gas for me. So I've seen the results, I see them everyday.

This person also remembers that she had been prepared for her layoff, due to her relationship with 'the Lord.' This kind of interpretation can turn any 'normally' traumatic experience into an opportunity, since these transitions are never isolationist, and can also accentuate the reality of the personal relationship with God.

> P. Because I do try more than anything else to have that relationship with the Lord, I knew I was going to be laid-off, He had told me, about a month before. And so I had already sort of prepared myself. So the day that [the director] came in I was able to say "I know that this isn't easy for you, but it's OK.." 'Cause God prepares His people, that's the kind of God He is, He looks after His people and He loves them. So I actually knew, that day I was walking here, but you know you don't want to face it, but I knew, so that's the way I could be so calm. And I was really struggling with my job here, I had wanted to do something more, but I was complacent, I'm no different than anyone else, I loved the people but I felt bored. But now all of a sudden the time was there. Because it's hard being in limbo, but in the last year there's been incredible changes in my life, and God's been trying to change me, to make me more flexible.

It appeared that the effects of having a strong faith, and personally-felt relationship with God, had much the same kind of positive effect on individuals as those commonly associated with strong network support. However, individuals reported both negative and positive effects of social networking, while only positive support from their individual faith. This outline of networking has been quite brief, since I have only used the aspects which were expressed as centrally important by my participants. In the next section, I will similarly review some of the gendered workplace dynamics that were seen as particularly significant by my participants. I have left out some interview material that could have been used in this chapter, since it was too highly personal in my opinion, and related to events which had occurred over a decade ago.

[3] Peripheralization of Women: Patriarchal Discourse and Perceptions

[3a] Male Perceptions of Having a Female Boss

The following male professional (at the time highly stressed following unemployment) discusses the decisions made by a female director, indicating a strong perception that the director was 'out of her league,' and unduly privileged by her position.

> P. But, she didn't want to take a pay cut, and uh she's not actually a planner herself, so she doesn't actually even do the same kind of work that I did, now that she's being asked to do, and there's a fairly steep learning curve on this kind of stuff, and so she's in over her head on the kinds of things she's supposed to do now. The logical decision that the board should have made is to dump her, and keep me, and the place could have basically run a lot smoother. That's my point of view.

A female employee states her opinion that at least some men resent working in any kind of position with a female boss. She dismisses this resentment as "their problem, not mine" twice, but at the same time notes that it does affect her personally.

> R. So you think men do resent working under a woman then?
> P. Oh yeah, I've had it more in my volunteer work, I've come against it there, but even then I refuse to be set back - I acknowledge it, and I think it's sad, but I will not, you know I figure it's their problem, it's not mine, I'll be very kind and I'll try and work with them, I'm not going to let it set me back, because where I find it mostly is with older men. Some of them, depending on what background they come from. I've had it with some older men, where I've been in charge in a committee or whatever and they don't want to acknowledge your authority. I figure, well, it's sad, you know it's their problem though it's not mine. I mean it does make me sad, but I learned that you know I just keep going and doing my best.

This male professional expresses both positive feelings about his female boss, ("nice enough lady") but also criticizes her for being 'moody' (a 'classical' female characteristic?) as well as for poor decision-making.[7]

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[7] Several studies examine the dilemmas which seem to have inherently negative effects on women in positions of

> P. Whereas I do try to - I don't really mind [the boss], she's an OK person, nice enough lady, very moody, but the thing is she, she made a mistake - she should have kept me on for another 8 or 9 months. That's why I sued.

The lack of experience of male professionals working under female managers is one reason for the reluctance to accept female authority, according to Javidan et al (1995). However, the segregation of women into the lower-paid occupations, related to their expected familial and household roles represents a patriarchically-structured occupational authority in the professional workplace, which is directly connected to gender-based expectations in the household. A few more specific examples given here have to do with what might be called 'peripheralizing discourse' which is very common in the workplace. This discourse is likely not consciously intended to humiliate or peripheralize women, but it can take on several forms and have several kinds of effects, which males are probably not even aware of.

[3b] 'Offensive Discourse': Or Initiation Ritual?

One of the most common gender-related aspects of an integrated workplace setting seems to be a significant amount of sexual joking and teasing, by both men and women. However, some of the joking by males towards females involves more explicit references to specific partners. It may be offensive at first, but taken as a sign of personal 'acceptance' by some women, as they become 'used' to it. This perceived need for acceptance by males

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authority, including Javidan, Bemmels, Devine and Dasmalchian (1995) and a large scale study about workplace authority by Wright, Baxter and Birkelund (1995). Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) interviewed over 100 male managers about their attitudes towards female managers, and found (1995:1293-1294) that perceptions of female managers were often based around generalizations about females in the service sector. As they say: ."... on the basis of their experience with one category of women (namely, women clerks), respondents appeared to be making evaluations about another category of women (namely, women managers). This behaviour appears to be similar to behaviour observed in the field of consumer behaviour....in the absence of much experience with a product class, consumers tend to generalize their experiences with other physically or semantically similar products to make a purchase decision...."

in the workplace must have a relationship to the male-dominated hierarchical structure there. The following people narrate these perspectives, but also note they feel a need to be able to "distance oneself" from these jokes and comments, which, to them, were analogous to workplace initiation ritual. Needing to 'be accepted,' while 'maintaining a personal distance' strongly implies the need to be accepted in a depersonalized sense.

> P. It is,[offensive] for the first bit, I suppose until they figure out how you're going to take certain comments they make? There wasn't really too much of that but, as you get to know them better and spend more time with them on a one-to-one basis, and projects and different things, and, I think it depends on your sense of humour about some things, some people take things very personally, when a comment is made, you know and other people can just say" well that's just a comment," and sort of distance it from themselves, and I don't know, maybe that's why I got along so well with all of them, I sort of knew they were kidding and I didn't take anything seriously, and I could just sort of leave it over there. So it didn't affect me no...and they talk about it {sex with wives} here too. {laughs}
> R. So they talked about these things, and they said it in front of you, but it didn't make you feel bad or anything?
> P. It didn't demean me or anything, no, it was almost as if they were treating me as one of the guys.
> R. So in your view it kind of felt like an acceptance thing?
> P. Yeah.

This person related her taking offence to the sexual teasing and explicit remarks to her youth and inexperience, implying that a woman should be able to desensitize herself from these comments in order to be effective within the professional workplace. Desensitization is seen here as another form of depersonalization.

> P. Summer jobs -- it really bugged me then. But I, you know I was young.
> R. You mean just the bantering about sex?
> P. Yeah and it and um,... things I think you are just more sensitive to when you're younger and stuff like that because you know, you are younger and you think that you know everything and. And, ah, there was one fellow who used to work here - an older man - and, the first time I talked to him he called me "little woman," and I thought....who is this jerk? Like you know I thought he was just the jerk I'd ever met in my life. Now when I came back, the second time... you know, years later, and stuff, and I met him again - and then I got to know him , and know what his

> life was like and stuff, and suddenly, I really liked the guy now. I think he's great. But it was just - that was the only, you know like, and I just think it was just... a youth thing and stuff. And the one time once somebody slapped me on the butt, and then I gave him hell for that (quietly) that was back... when I was here the first time too. But other than that, no, it's always been - and I think, like, especially with me, like I've worked in drafting departments and traditionally they're... men. Drafting classes are traditionally... men. I've been in classes where I was the only girl.... so you kind of ... know you're going to have to... put up with that, and if you make a big stink about it and... put on the thing - they're just going to ride you more, and they get worse
> R. Like any brother?
> P. Yeah! exactly

Some good articles that have dealt with the issue of 'ambiguously offensive' remarks by males directed towards females include Gardner (1978) and Suarez-Orozco and Dundes (1984), both dealing with the issue of street remarks. Minson offers a definition of harassment which would definitely include the kinds of remarks described here..

> ... unlawful sexual harassment is unwanted, unsolicited and unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature which is primarily, though not exclusively, directed against women, which takes place mainly in the workplace and in educational institutions and which has *detrimental effects on the terms or conditions of her employment* or education. this conduct may be physical...verbal (jokes, propositioning, comments on appearance); or related to seeing or being seen (ogling, pin-ups)
> (Minson 1993:47 [*emphasis mine*])

Some of the following narrations will show how seemingly innocuous comments and joking can have the "detrimental effects" that Minson speaks of.

[3c] Sexual Joking: A 'Male Thing'?

Another aspect of this kind of discourse directed at or overheard by women, is that, along with it being viewed as a sort of acceptance ritual, it is also often seen as a 'normal' male characteristic. According to the following woman, men are simply more graphic and personal in their discourse revolving around sexuality.

> R. If men talk about their wives, I suspect that women talk about their husbands too
> P. Yeah, they do. The men even with us would talk about their wives, although not the... men tend to get into the sex with their wives, you know, find out what goes on in bed kind of thing.
> R. Well I knew it was a male thing, I just thought that maybe women did it too.
> P. No, not that way - what they will do is, well the only thing sexual they would ever do is go "He came home with some lingerie yesterday" and everyone goes "ooh," and that would be about as much as you'd get into any of the....
> R. Where men go into graphic details of what happened in bed the last night?
> P. Yeah.

Sexual joking and teasing was not only initiated by men, and the following woman notes that the women would also try to embarrass the men, also in an explicit manner, but not necessarily referring to any specific person.

> R. Given that the men would joke about sexual things, I guess like most men, - the women though were different? Or do you think they're the same?
> P. I think they're pretty much the same, I don't know, um,...we would embarrass the guys quite regularly I thought, in the coffee room {laughs}. Men will joke about the sex and stuff like that, and what they say might embarrass a woman - but, on the same token, the women would get talking about stuff where the guys would just about die, and they'd leave the coffee room too "I don't want to hear about this, you know." I thought anyhow, and you know there was a lot of points, in the office, once they started doing lay-offs, they - I think we've always been more women, than men. And it was getting to the ridiculous, at one point, where there were about 5 guys and 12 women, you know. So I mean, they had to put up with quite a lot too. {laughs}

A main problem seems to occur in the severity of the effects of this kind of sexual joking, related to specificity of the object of the joking. When it is 'general' joking, not really directed at anyone specifically, and especially not about any specific person, such as a spouse, it is not perceived as highly offensive. It is very different when the joking involves a specifically-known person, in which case it is taken very personally, in ways that men may not be aware of, but women definitely are, as the following section shows.

[3d] Problematic Inference: "Is My Husband Talking About Me Too"?

When women in a workplace hear men talking in sexual terms about their wives, they express doubts and concern that their own husbands may be talking about them in other workplaces. This was a concern expressed by the following woman, even though she had also perceived it individually as a sort of 'natural' acceptance ritual. This kind of inference often necessitates a dualistic interpretation, as it cannot be reconciled.

> P. Exactly, they do that - we all knew they did that and um and the men tend - this is another thing that I often thought because my husband works away from home - he used to work in the Fish and Wildlife office, so I knew how the men were, and that they could flirt with you and really flirt up a storm if they wanted to, especially when I first started there, you were young and in your early 20s well you're kind of well, at that point, you sort of lose it as you get older
> R. You get to know them better?
> P. You get to know them better, they get to know you better and it's just different, but yeah, I kind of wondered about him (her husband) you know, what if he goes and flirts with the secretaries and...
> R. Talks about you?
> P. Yeah! you know, like I said that to him once - "you better not do that " I said there's only one man in our office who I really respected because he never did that. And he never says a bad word about his wife and I admire him because of that. You know all the other guys, who have beautiful wives, will just say the most horrible things about them when you think "holy crow!"

The next person shows her inability to reconcile these doubts, as she begins by asserting that her boyfriend would never talk in such a manner about her. However, she has also tried to 'confirm' this by talking about it with his mother.

> R. I was wondering, because you had a boyfriend, and he was off doing other things, did you ever wonder if he talked about you the same way?
> P. No he's not, he wouldn't do that.
> R. So you just figured he didn't?
> P. Yeah, he's very, his mom was very good, when he was living at home I found out a lot of things from his mom, that I wouldn't have known about, and I guess his friends would phone him up on the weekend and say "let's go out to the bar and stuff," and he'd say " no I can't do that that's not fair to (me)" So I found out certain things about his personality that would sort of lead me to believe that he wasn't like that. Otherwise, yeah, I wouldn't have a good way of knowing, but his

mom was filling me in on these little things.

[4] The Gendered Familial Workplace Experience

These observations, involving a few aspects of the gendered economy and workplace must be taken into consideration as affecting the nature of the personalized workplace solidarity that I've been describing. In some ways this workplace can be seen as a gender-integrated workplace family. However, the socially structured workplace cannot avoid being gendered to some extent, as all societal ideologies and structures are intrinsically gendered (see Harding and O'Barr 1987). It is apparent that through discourse and expressed perceptions, men have much more power than women in the workplace, with regard to status and positions. More importantly, however, is the apparent patriarchal manifestations of this positional power which gives women impressions that they are the ones who must work very hard to be 'accepted' by the men, and become 'desensitized' in order to be an effective member of the workplace family.

The following person notes another inferential problem for women, in this case those who have achieved high positions in the workplace. Looking back on the situations of her dismissal, she does not make direct reference to her gender, but does to personal characteristics which may have contributed to what people thought of her. She expresses this in terms of her being very critically "vocal," and being possibly seen as an "irritant" rather than in a constructive way as she intended, characteristics usually associated with aggressiveness.

> P. Well, I don't know for sure either, [why her position was cut] ... and that's one of the things that happens, is you have all kinds of suspicions, and... they'll never be confirmed, so...
> R. Do you sense though that you were treated unfairly in general?

> P. (very long pause) I don't know, I mean relative to what? I mean, I knew there were going to be cuts...I knew that it had to be... people that were cut.... and.... they went looking for people. And, then they rationalized their decisions however they want to, and ah, I don't think that there is any fair way... to do it - obviously I wouldn't make the same decisions, but... I don't have the same management style and the same kinds of priorities for the organization, so, I don't like what they did, I didn't like... a lot of the decisions that were going on....I didn't think that there was any sort of leadership, by administration at all. I didn't think there was any clear picture of where they wanted to go, or what they wanted to be at the end of it, and I'm sure they knew that I was not happy with what they were doing in the last couple of years that I was there. Because I can be quite vocal, and I let people know because nothing changes if you don't. And uh, I'm sure that didn't help. Well, you know why don't we just get rid of her 'cause she's a pain in the butt anyway. Because she asks all these difficult questions you know. I remember one meeting where they were telling us about some new wonderful thing that they were doing through this process, and there was something very inconsistent from what they said their goal was and what they were doing and I asked the question and the answer was "yes it is inconsistent" You know, then, why are we doing this. and, so I think I was seen as.... an irritant.

The doubts expressed by this woman are common to most women, when they reach upper executive levels. Bhatnagar and Swamy (1995) note that if women are perceived as exhibiting positively-valued 'male' characteristics like assertiveness or competitiveness, this is considered as 'inappropriate behaviour for their sex.'[8]

Another interesting observation from my research was that all but one of the lawsuits filed against the employer after becoming unemployed, involved unemployed males. Bitterness and resentment towards administration of the workplaces was expressed much more by males in general. I asked one of the survivors of the layoffs about this, since she had noted that the more "bitter" individuals, as she put it, were formerly intimate friends whom she no longer sees at all. The more angry and bitter laid-off employees don't come into the workplace to visit and keep up acquaintances like some others do. The intense anger of some of the people, that disallowed their associating with the survivors, also appeared to be gendered, as observed by the following person who survived the cutbacks.

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[8] At the same time, in relation to the dominant theme having to do with ritualization and meaning-creation in the workplace, the patriarchal conceptualization of women as rather peripheral, is a misrepresentation in this and other contexts. Many book-length studies show the central importance of women in ritual activities cross-culturally (see especially the edited volume by Hoch-Smith and Spring (1978) and Sered (1992).Middletone-Keirn (1978) discusses women's roles specifically in reference to their centrality in creation of meaningful communities. Sered (1992:122-150) discusses the increasing role of women in ritualization processes involving situational meanings and morality.

> R. Out of the people that still come back here, and still maintain friendships, how many of them are men?
> P. None of them. Yeah it is strange, none of them are, they're all women. And it's funny, 'cause the women who have left, I can't think of any of them who would feel too angry to visit here. When they're so angry about it too, it makes me wonder if they would have been happier if it would have been me [laid-off] instead [of them] then. And I guess so, I guess they would have been happier.

[5] Chapter Summary

One of the most important points to emerge from the narrations in this chapter has to do with the relative levels of self-identity placed in occupational or workplace position, compared to levels of self-identity associated with ancillary interests, in particular those revolving around the household and family. Although the levels of trauma upon becoming unemployed were no less for women than for men, without consideration of positive self-identification outside of the workplace, women seemed to have a much higher level of these ancillary identifications, and could fall back upon them when dislocated from their workplace position.

It is very important to realize at this point that this does not mean that it is 'easier' for women to be unemployed than for men. This would be a simplistic conclusion, definitely reflecting the long-standing patriarchal assumption that women 'should' be the primary caregivers and household workers, whether or not they have a job outside of the home.

Instead of concluding from the evidence in this chapter that it is easier for women to be unemployed than for men, and viewing this as in any way 'natural,' the very opposite should be construed. In fact, the main reason that women seem to have a definite advantage over men in cases of unemployment, is directly due to the patriarchal assumption that it is 'natural' for women to be more heavily involved, and thus identify more highly with interests outside of the workplace. As I have demonstrated, meaningfulness and self-identification are developed through *practice*, and the disturbing fact demonstrated above and in a wealth of literature, is that men do not *practice* enough childcare and household duties to include these as integral elements of their habituses as women do. The outcome is apparently that women today have a multiplicity of hard-earned well-developed positive self-identifications, through extensive and ongoing practice.

What should be concluded from the information in this chapter, is that men could greatly benefit, especially in times of unreliable occupational positions, through markedly increasing their practice in the household sphere. This is a very important observation, and diachronically opposed to the sadly more common patriarchal, yet ludicrous thought that women do not suffer as much from unemployment, thus do not identify as strongly with their occupational positions. This would be analogous to the equally ludicrous thought that men would not suffer as much as women at the loss of a child. Rather, in general, divesting all of one's self-worth in an occupational position, would only seem to indicate a very narrow, almost introverted focus, which is not as healthy as broadening the scope of one's self-identification, through increased practice in a variety of areas.

Although I have kept this overview of some of the gender-based concerns brief, it should be sufficient to illustrate some of the gendered properties of the sense of family that exists in the workplace. This is necessary, since experiences in the (even partially autonomous) workplace are never 'gender-neutral,' or completely divorced from dominant, societal ideologies. Still, this workplace 'family' remains a central focus of distinctive experiences, and the working out of tensions within and enjoyment of a highly interactive adult setting. Much of the social networking processes are also found within, or directly related to the workplace. The specific field-related workplace is shown here to affect, and be affected by, personalities, gender, social interaction and self-perceptions. In the following chapters I will examine in more depth the experiential effects which occur at a personal level, when this tightly-knit, structured workplace 'family' is almost completely dissolved.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUAL: INFLUENCES OF DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES ABOUT WORK, CONSUMPTION, AND THE CATEGORY OF THE JOBLESS

In this chapter I examine some of the broader dominant societal perceptions relating to work and unemployment. This is intended to complement and add to the previous discussion about the central importance of the specific field-related workplace. Although the specific workplace can be seen as partially mediatory in relation to the larger society, agents cannot be seen as artificially detached from these broader ideological influences.

There are four main sections in this chapter, and I concentrate on three main ideological themes. In the first section, I look at various aspects of the work ethic as a secularised precept in western society. In this section I include a discussion of such things as the mutually-definitive relationship of work to leisure time, and the concept of working as a 'debt to society.' Work is also examined in terms of the relationship between the individual self and societal position.

In the second section, I look at the ways in which work in western society has come to take on moral qualities which we would usually associate with some form of religious belief system. I also discuss how this moralistic conception of work in general affects the creation and characterization of the unemployed as a societal category. I end this section by showing how there seems to be an individualistic qualification of both work ethic ideology as well as the importance of work as financially rewarding.

In the third section, I examine some of the main aspects of consumerism in western society. I outline consumption as a form of ritual which serves to 'integrate' the self and the larger social world, including the importance of lifestyle development and maintenance. I show ways in which the economic elite in western society has also become the 'moral elite,' and also relate this to the need to integrate the self with a large, often impersonal society. I also show how, like the work ethic, consumption has become imbued with an 'inherent' moral quality, and the ways in which mass-mediated consumption promotes the ability to become a 'member' of a definitive symbolic community through the use of specific products.

In the fourth section I conclude this chapter by bringing the focus back to individual agency and choice, within the dominant ideological influences already outlined. These ideological constructs, while acknowledged as influential, are not centrally seen in a deterministic sense in relation to the individual, who is shown to have the ability to form their own conceptual frameworks, using choices based on personal values and beliefs. This is consistent with the way that individual agency was depicted in the discussion of the collective habitus in chapters four and five.

[1] Reasons to Value Work: From a 'Protestant' Work Ethic to a Secularized One

The advent of European industrialization, with its associated values and their export to the western world, gave rise to what is commonly called the "Protestant work ethic" or "Puritan work ethic."[7] What this means, in simple terms, is that work is valued in and of itself, so that the individual's moral self-worth comes to depend upon the activity of working in a wage economy. Rose (1985:29-31) demonstrates that although Max Weber coined the phrase "Protestant work ethic," "Much economic and historical research on Weber's association of religion and the work ethic remains inconclusive, and Weberian thought about this association remains historically undemonstrable." Rose prefers to simplify the phrase to the "work ethic," and provides a definition which is quite adequate for the purposes of this study.

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[7] Newman (1989:76) describes the concept of the work ethic as having its roots in Calvinist theology, which stressed the individual's responsibility for his/her own destiny, and created what she calls a "meritocratic individualism."

> What matters is whether, after the [industrialization] period as a whole, an ideology stressing diligence, punctuality, deferment of gratification, and the primacy of the work domain, had, in these societies, gained an important place in their cultures *as a whole.* There is no need to argue that it predominated in them to perceive how it could operate successfully to organize meaning for many persons....
>
> (Rose 1985:31)

Rose further elaborates upon his definition, illustrating a Marxist influence in combining these characteristics of the work ethic with the commitment to the "market principle," which includes an acceptance of the concept of human labour as a commodity.

> ... the chief commodity that is bought and sold is labour itself, or more strictly speaking, the capacity to expend effort.... The paramount work value, in such a fundamental view, must be commitment to the market principle itself. For workers this implies the readiness to conceive of oneself as a saleable bundle of labour capacity.
>
> (Rose 1985:33)

Various researchers on unemployment (for example: Wadel 1973; Rose 1985; Shamir 1986; Burman 1988; Newman 1989) have shown that the work ethic continues to organize and shape peoples' conceptions of who they are in relation to society.[8] Different reasons have been advanced for this; a primary one has to do with our linear concept of time. As Rinehart (1988:xii) notes.

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[8] Although this is the case in these and other studies, this concept of the influence of such a simple definition of the 'work ethic' is used in these studies as a theoretical basis, rather than as a hypothesis to be examined in

> "For [the unemployed], there is a virtual absence of patterned sequences of routine activity and rejuvenating respite. Days fade together. Weekends and holidays are indistinguishable from weekdays. The complaint "One day is the same as the next" reverberates throughout...."

Work, then is valuable to individuals because of the organizational nature of jobs, as noted by Rose (1985:31), and the "social anchorage" it provides for many, as noted in different ways by Perlmann (1968); Wadel (1973); Newman (1989); Burman (1988) and Howe (1990).

[1a] Time-Structuring; "Work" and "Leisure" Time

Jobs, no matter what their nature, are based around the organization of time and routinization of the workday. These are some elements of work in industrial society that distinguish work time from leisure time, and thus make the latter valuable mainly in relation to the former.[2] Turner explains the powerful nature of this definition of leisure through the usually secular, yet still ritualized experience of work time:

> For Demazedier, then, "leisure" presupposes "work." It is a non-work, even an anti-work phase in the life of a person who also works. Leisure, he holds, arises

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depth. In most of these studies, participants' behaviour, values and responses are thus rather too immediately attached to the work ethic as a causal property. In my study, when asked about the influence of the basic concept of the work ethic, almost all participants thought of this as an almost inappropriate question. They responded in a much more complex 'version' of the work ethic, which had to involve developmental objectification of specific individual interests, in an educational and subsequent workplace environment. Only some of the longer-term unemployed would agree that 'any work is better than none.' This has been illustrated in chapters four and five, and necessitated my going into further elaboration on motivational influences, towards a more personal, microscopic concept of the central valuing of work as a ***developmental process.***

[2] For a philosophical discussion on leisure being valid mainly in relation to work, see Simon (1971). Burman (1988:139-164) further illustrates this relationship using interview data.

> under two conditions: (1) The first is that society ceases to govern its activities by means of common ritual obligations, some activities, including those of work and leisure, become, at least in theory, *subject to individual choice*. (2) Secondly, the work by which a person earns his or her living is "set apart from his other activities; its limits are no longer natural but arbitrary" - indeed, it is organized in such a fashion that it can easily be separated, both in theory and practice, from his free time. Now it is in industrial and industrializing countries that we mostly find these conditions. Here work is organized by industry, by clocking in and out, by office hours, and so on...
>
> (Turner 1977:41)

The acquiescing, or giving up of personal organization of time, as involved in the definition of work, and its value, is so central that employed people do not count time on the job as their 'own,' as Wadel explains:

> Thus, when people, for some reason or other, stop their ordinary work to engage in informal chat, they - and their employers and their colleagues - are likely to feel that they are "stealing" time away from their work.
>
> (Wadel 1979:373)

A few of my participants seemed to express their feelings about their unemployment as if they were stealing time. One person used the analogy of "playing hooky":

> P. I felt really, really guilty, I felt like I was playing hooky, I mean, I never, I played hooky I think once in my life from school, and that was in high school to go scuba diving you know, and that was a special day, you know I felt guilty - I was, I was afraid...

Newman (1989:63) cites Decker (1983) as making the point that the nature of time changes upon unemployment, and being unemployed is often considered as 'stolen time.'

> The unemployed individual is prevented from organizing time positively because 'justifiable' nonworking periods are typically given their valuation through work: coffee-breaks, weekends, vacations, periods of business-related travel, illness, recuperation and retirement are all defined in relation to one's status as a working individual. Unemployment, unhappily renders free time "unjustified," an expansion of the underside of constant productive activity, of *stolen moments of idleness* ...
>
> (Decker (1983), in Newman (1989:63) [*emphasis mine*])

According to all studies of the experience of the unemployed, (for example, see Burman

1988:139-164) most working people value both this externally-imposed structuring of time and its antithesis, the relatively unstructured or personally-structured time of leisure. In Western society these different kinds of time-structuring complement each other, and are seen as necessary for most people. The next individual noted that being unemployed could not be conceptualized as a 'holiday,' since it was not a leisure period *between* working periods.

> R. They talk about that in the literature, as work being structured time as opposed to leisure time, and they generally agree that leisure time is only valuable when it is related to work, time off work.
> P. That's right, yeah, - [unemployment] never felt like a holiday.

The everyday life of the employed, in most cases highly routinized around the clock, make getting up in the morning, and all the routine of getting ready for work, is given meaning through workplace practice. Presenting an obviously 'prepared for work' image is an important part of the self-objectification realized in the workplace. Coffee breaks mean something in their antithetical relationship to work time, as do weekends or leisure time.

Ritual becomes an important part of the structuring of work time, and as Gibson (1989:63) points out, the meanings attached to the rituals include socially approved perceptions of appropriateness and 'correctness.' This highly structured secular ritual occasion of the workplace is also meaningful at the collective level. Because of the ability of working status to make leisure time 'justified' and valuable, people may tolerate and even value what are intrinsically, or of themselves, meaningless or unfulfilling jobs. (This was not, however, the attitude expressed by my participants, who required specific occupational meaning and purpose, and particular workplace characteristics, in order to view their jobs as valuable.)[3]

Rinehart (1988:xiii) expresses this opinion, when he refers to joblessness as an "abyss" because of the lack of external, inevitable time-structuring,[4] or organizational ritual of the job world. This is 'liminal' terminology which shows a common perception of why the work ethic persists in a radically changing society..."..we begin to comprehend why people 'consent' to exploitive and alienated labour and why individuals become attached to and express "satisfaction" with jobs that lack intrinsic gratifications."

[1b] Work as a "Debt to Society"

During work and leisure time, there are meanings attached to employment, related to individual conceptions of the relationship of the self to the larger society. Simon stresses this aspect of the valuing of work as a 'debt' to society.

> For our purposes here, the general idea and the sentiment behind this glorification of work may be reduced to the proposition that whoever lives in society owes society a debt which has to be repaid by the continual exercise of socially useful activities.
>
> (Simon 1971:41)

Wadel follows along the same lines as the 'debt-to-society' theory, in this case describing it in terms of reciprocity:

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[3] Again, I did not find this attitude among my research population. however, my participants were or had all worked in a professional, highly occupationally-specific work environment. Still, upon becoming unemployed, the work-related element of time-structuring became highly important, and this supports the main body of literature. *However, while working, unlike while unemployed, the time-structuring was not a central value, and it was only after very prolonged unemployment that individuals began to express the potential to value jobs that they previously would not have.* This did not seem to occur, depending upon financial constraints, until after more than one year of unemployment, and even then not among all of those unemployed for over a year.

[4] The people whom I interviewed did not perceive time-structuring in the workplace either as highly significant as a value, or as ritualistically significant. In chapter ten, however, I show how 'unstructured time' during unemployment was seen as a main dilemma and as very disconcerting by most participants.

> It is through his work, in the form of job or self-employment, that a man earns his living and it is by earning a living that a man claims *reciprocity in relation to society*...
>
> (Wadel 1973:108 [*emphasis mine*])

The 'debt-to-society' theories make an important contribution, by pointing out that the work ethic does not have to refer to the individual pursuit of work as an 'end in itself.' The work ethic is highly social, if work is looked at as a contribution to a society perceived as dependent upon the 'giving' individual. Although it is questionable whether people would actually express their feelings about work in these terms, this philosophical and ideological idea may be part of the 'background' of the valuation of work. It especially becomes obvious in the common conceptual division of society into categories like the 'givers' and 'takers,' deserving and undeserving, and so forth. However, none of my participants expressed their work as a 'debt' to society.

Of course there are people who value what we call leisure, or non-working time intrinsically, without the usual comparison to work as time-management. As well, there are individuals whose positive self-concepts are not linked to any feeling of societal obligation to participate in the work-force. However, these people are definitely the minority, and the general consensus among researchers is that the work ethic remains strongly felt as a situating factor related to personal self-worth. Perlmann gives a good, simple account of the role of employment and the concept of self in relation to society.

> ...work - an adult's occupational role - is a basic force in his stabilization, development and sense of identity. He may or may not like it. At its worst it may constrict and undermine his sense of self-worth, may damage his motivation, may dull his powers of mind and muscle. At its best it may expand and enhance his sense of identity, of mastery, of social worth and competence as well as his

> repertoire of social skills. But under either circumstance work provides him an anchorage in the social system, a basic explanation of his identity, an "own reality," a linkage to his fellow men."
>
> (Perlmann 1968:59)

Other researchers note the aspect of work as 'positioning' an individual in relation to society, even when the work in itself may have many negative effects or connotations.

[1c] Work and Societal Self - Positioning

As this unemployed person says, it is not only self-identification with the workplace that is central, but his perception of the ways that significant others identify him with his former field and workplace.

> P. Most people that I know, identify me with that [work] place and vice-versa, so now I have to re-create, basically a new identity {disgust}. I mean I'm still the same person, but you are where you work to a great extent.

Wadel notes the importance of social status gained from employment, in relation to other peoples' perceptions, and the ability to interact positively with others.

> Work, then, puts a man in a complementary position: it gives him status in relation to family, the community, the economy, and the polity.... Because of its positive value in defining a man's relationship to individuals, groups and institutions, and because of its costs which demand moral strength, the work role tends towards a kind of moral imperative. Work becomes something one *should* do and something that is praiseworthy *because* of the costs involved.
>
> (Wadel 1973:108-109)

The following person expressed his view on the merits of continuing to attempt to be a success in the workplace. This individual had experienced significant losses in an attempt to start a private business after becoming unemployed, and subsequent failure to enter a new field after significant post-secondary re-training. He rationalized the continuing necessity of re-entering the workplace; in this case, relating this importance to a common element of the 'American Dream' success concept, namely that if a person keeps trying hard, they are sure to eventually succeed. This may be seen as a common rhetorical 'rationale' for conforming to precepts of the work ethic. He further uses the analogy of unemployment as 'personal injury' which can only be 'cured' through work.

> P. They say that people in ah, the normal part of life are going to change their job X number of times, change careers X number of times, now I listen to some tapes sometimes in my car - I was listening to a guy speak, and he said "do you know that Walt Disney went broke, declared bankruptcy twice, and spent 6-8 months in a mental hospital, before he came up with the concept for Disneyland." So people, quite often, who are successful, in business, I think have 2 or 3 characteristics, things that I've read about them, and one is that they go broke 2 or 3 times before they finally make it. So that's that kind of drive or resiliency that has to be there. And when people sort of realize that and "oh my god I don't want this to happen to me again" - it's sort of like being a skier, falling and breaking your leg and, well, as soon as it heals I've got to get back out there on the team you know, and I know it might break again, but you've got to do it.

It is because work provides the individual with an "anchorage in the social system," as Perlmann and Wadel note, and a positioning that is societally positively valued, that work in general remains valued by most people.

This does not mean that the work ethic has to include the concept that jobs are valuable *in themselves,* as Shamir (1986:27) shows. This definition of valued work is too broad, for as Perlmann (1968:63-) points out, in many cases jobs are not viewed as intrinsically positive aspects of life for many reasons.[5] Still, even when people hate their jobs and ascribe no special importance to, interest in, or knowledge of the market system and associated ideology, their job can still provide a positive sense of highly valued social community. After becoming unemployed, even the inability to be able to complain about the job and/or conditions at the workplace, can become strongly missed, and in that way, is also one of the values of working. This person, who was at the time unemployed for ten months, expressed the view that the employed did not realize the value of their jobs as long as they had them.

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[5] Much other research shows that work is not 'intrinsically' valued, but valued (or not) for a great variety of reasons (see Hurlbert (1991); Hodson et el (1994);Yoon et al (1994); Allcorn (1995); Cohen (1995); Stevenson and Bartunek (1996). George and Jones (1997:396) make the observation that work is valued largely for personal values that relate to the undesirability of oppositions, such as poor working conditions, or especially unemployment: ."..a value as 'an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence' and a value system as 'an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance.' Central to these definitions is the fact that values and value systems are thought of in relative terms: values in terms of preferences for behaviours or end-states relative to their converses and value systems in terms of the relative importance of any given value relative to others in the system."

> P. This is what bugs me - is people would say 'I'm sick and tired of work if only I could just have a couple of days off' and then I'd be sitting there going "well I'd be happy to have the job" you know {laughs} you know like it's always greener on the other side of the fence. I'm sitting here thinking - "I'd love to have a job where I'd get up and go everyday" and then I hear people saying - and I used to do the same thing when I was working - "Oh if we could only have a couple days off, we could only have a long weekend," and I said, "It's always greener on the other side of the fence, because now I'm {unemployed}." I always look at people you know, and I'm even walking home from the gym in the morning and they're all going to their offices and I'm thinking " I hope you guys are really thankful for your job" {laughs}. You don't realize what it is 'till you're out of it.

This raises the possibility that a sense of individual moral self-worth may increase corresponding to the perceived unpleasantness of the job situation, and the ability to participate in social expressions of positive self-concepts like 'persistence,' 'ability to deal with problems' and so forth.

If a sense of workplace community was not something which was perceived, upon reflection, to be very positive, an unemployed individual may reflect in a negative manner about their former position, as the following person does. It should be noted, however, that this person seemed traumatized and bitter about the loss of his former position, an obvious indication of its value to him. Further, the infighting he mentions could also contribute to a sense of workplace community, in the same way that complaining about the job can be an important part of the social experience of 'having' a position. Even when the workplace members are highly discordant, the more individualistically-perceived position may attain an increased personalized quality.

> P. Oh, what I miss is all the, in the last few years from a couple of people, was the infighting, the backbiting, {both laugh}. It was, it was really getting ugly in the last few years. We really had a lot of nuts into our office since the early '70s, I'll tell you. My ah, opinion, you know. Some of them were pretty level-headed people, but boy we had some real dingbats come in, people that thought they were far better than they were, and real opinions of themselves, ivy-league eastern ways of thinking, in western situations, people that, ah, would build houses on company time, back when times were good, back in the '70s when you could ... just not show up at the office - I got jaded.

The above observations include disillusionment which is significantly related to two things; the workplace community and how people got along, as well as a morality-based assessment of people who 'cheated' on 'company time.' It is obvious that the individual's position in the workplace was both socially and *morally* important to him.

[2] The Moral Valuing of Work, and Categorizing the Unemployed

Even people who are disillusioned about their jobs may make strict moral distinctions between the employed and unemployed as societal categories. As Howe observes, part of the high value placed on work is due to the ability of the worker to denigrate the unemployed in moral terms, as individuals and as groups.

> ... moral superiority is claimed by invoking distinctions which denigrate a whole category of others. Such claims to moral superiority are based on the notion that those deemed undeserving do not conform to moral standards widely accepted throughout society, but rather style their life in accordance with a different moral view of the world. Such people, it is thought, want something for nothing, they are parasites...
>
> (Howe 1990:190)

Working, therefore (however pleasant or unpleasant) "anchors" and positions the worker in the 'morally-correct' societal category. Working people thus have the power, simply by virtue of their employed status, to stigmatize and marginalize the unemployed (Shamir 1986:27). I examine this in more depth, using interview data, in chapter eight. This is another aspect of the motivational influence of work ethic that could make any job seem better than no job; the socially empowering status of belonging to the category of employed tax-payer. This person, who survived the cutbacks in her office, describes her and her husband's thoughts about the large severance packages that were given to laid-off individuals[6]. She also describes her opinion of a general ideology of people 'getting something for nothing,' as destroying the work ethic.

> P. This is kind of a raw point with us. My husband works for social services and so he sees this on a daily basis. The people who could be working, who choose not to, but that have more benefits than we have. They have their medical paid, they complain about what low social assistance they might get, but if you add on their benefits, with all these other things, they're getting a lot more than what we bring in as working people and I think that's what's the big problem, there's really no incentive to work other than money these days. *And it's so easy to get the money without working now that there isn't the work ethic there used to be. My dad always raised us with the work ethic, where you worked hard and saved all of your money and that sort of thing. You don't get anything for nothing. And now you can, you can get lots for nothing.* When these severance packages went out, well that is just what they expected, you know. It's just that they've grown to

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[6] Lindbeck and Snow (1988) have written an interesting monograph about what they call the "insider-outsider" theory of unemployment. The basis of this theory is that working individuals already securely-positioned in the workplace, are hard to replace, considering severance packages and so forth which they would receive. These "insiders" are seen to effect levels of unemployment, since these considerations have to be balanced against the cost of training new recruits and developing their skill to suit business needs. Still, in times of such drastic budget reductions, the unemployed participants in my study all had to make the transition from "insider to "outsider", although some of them did note the inefficiencies of this process, considering the large severance packages, and the likelihood of their being rehired when economic times improved. Some of this kind of rehiring is going on now that Klein has just won another term in office, and his goal of deficit-reduction has been achieved. Klein calls this "reinvesting", but the costs of layoffs and subsequent rehirings has been enormous.

> expect that someone will take care of them, somehow, and it doesn't matter if they've gone into debt by their own stupidity or they've racked up debts; where someone else is living in a nice $80,000 house and managing fine on half of what they had.
>
> [*emphasis mine*]

Martin (1987) shows that the market system ideology, or meritocracy, stresses in a broad sense the value of any job as preferable to the 'morally-deficient' converse of unemployment. It is also an ideology associated with societal hierarchical organization, and a system of power being really held by the few who are able to control the many. The morally 'correct' category includes objective socio-economic power, as well as the conceptual empowerment of having the dichotomous category of the 'morally-deficient' unemployed to 'look down upon.'

On one hand, the dissatisfied employed person can still feel morally justified, in continuing to 'persevere' in the workplace, unlike the 'parasitic' unemployed. The satisfied worker can look at the unemployed and feel even more satisfaction in their own social and economic situation. As Shamir (1986:27) observes, "It has been found that the [work ethic] is related to blaming the poor for their condition, to ***blaming the unemployed for their predicament*** and to negative attitudes to welfare payments and to recipients of welfare." [*emphasis mine*] This person had the distinct impression that he was being looked down upon as an unemployed person, and that this was directly related to a strong work ethic in the particular community.

> R. Do you feel that, being unemployed, people look down on you?
> P. I did, you know, for the longest time, and Darkwater is very 'work ethic,' you know, even though some fathers that are raising families are called Mr. Moms and everything, you still get the impression that they're saying "why is he not working." You know, you go out at 2 in the afternoon, you know, especially if you don't have any kids with you, and, ah... I guess people work shift work, but...

The perceived moralistic qualities of work, strongly entrenched mutually-defining working /non-working categorical dualism, and the link between these and opposing personal 'characteristics,' were solidified in the beginning of the nineteenth century in the Western world, according to Campbell.

> It is hardly surprising that the development of this ideal of character caused the conflict between the ethics of sincerity and propriety, which had simmered throughout the late eighteenth century, to finally boil over in the first half of the nineteenth; and, transformed by the triumph of the bourgeoisie and consequent despair of the artists into a clash between genius and utilitarianism, finally solidify into the form of a clear-cut opposition between 'self' and 'society.' The range of stark alternatives presented to a person of sensibility and imagination now became those of success or integrity, utility or play, work or leisure, comfort or pleasure, 'the world' or 'the spirit,' as estrangement became the natural state for romantically inclined intellectuals.
>
> (Campbell 1987:194)

As the self became "estranged" from society, as Campbell notes, in all likelihood this would have had an alienating effect, parallel to the Marxist and Durkheimian concepts of alienation, *if* work did not emerge as the moralistic character-enhancing and societal-positioning force as it has. This person, who is still working, but now in contract jobs without benefits, speaks of the moral benefits derived from experiencing times of unemployment without assistance. She illustrates both the sense of individualism, which is associated with individualistic independence from society, or 'estrangement,' as well as the perceived character-developing virtues of this individualism.

> P. And the more you live on the more you need to do that. My husband was unemployed for seven months and we've lived on our own savings and our own everything, we didn't have to get help from anyone else. And I think it's good for every couple to go through that. You can't just expect someone to jump in and take care of you. And the extent that people will go to; you can't go on assistance if you've got $3,000 in the bank, so you go out and you blow it, so that somebody else will hand you money, and so I think that's how typically some people have become.

This conceptual dichotomization of the worker as being 'above' the non-worker is essential to the political workings of the market system, and to the continued relevance of the work ethic itself. Even if the worker in reality has little or no power in their position, which is the case for the majority of workers, they conceptually can always have more power than the unemployed. This serves the political interest of the economic organization and its hierarchical structure (Martin 1987:438). Hierarchies and relative powerlessness within organizations can be conceptually down-played, as long as the welfare recipient and unemployed remain conceptually powerless, 'excluded from the system' and the 'lowest' on the conceptual scale.

This is likely one of the main reasons that my study of newspaper articles about issues of 'recession' in Alberta, revealed a main emphasis is on the plight of the welfare recipient. They are highlighted consistently, which must serve the interests firstly of the middle-class worker who can then appreciate their jobs and feel better about themselves. This also allows the worker to complain about 'supporting' these people, contributing to the positive worker self-image as 'productive' and socially on the 'powerful' side of the fence.

[2a] Individual Values: Not Exactly the Work Ethic, Not Only the Pay.

The above are some of the reasons that the work ethic generally remains intact, although they also show that it is for highly social reasons that work is valued, and work is not valued just 'in and of itself.' None of my participants felt that they had stayed in their previous occupational positions only for monetary reasons. They all stated that the money was an important consideration, but they had diverse individual reasons for having formerly been in specific occupations. The following person said that her main reason for working was to 'realize her potential' in a specific occupation, since she viewed her mother as having had to give up so much in order to raise children in the private sphere. This person invested a lot in post-secondary education, and chose a field related to her specific interests, even though she did not envision herself as working consistently full-time all her life. She obviously saw significant value in child raising as well, but wanted to *develop* her interests, and always have the *option* of part-time work after childbearing.

> P. My mom worked in a bank, and she was good at it, and then when my Dad and her decided to have kids, then she stayed home. She was not the type of woman that should have stayed home - it was good for us kids, but she had a lot of potential, that just wasn't being used properly. So I sort of got that message when I was growing up, so I went to university, I was always kind of smart, so I thought I should go to university, sort of a natural thing to do, and when I was there, looking for a direction to go into, I wanted to be an architect, but we didn't have enough money for me to go away to school, and, I wasn't sure about getting a loan and that sort of thing, and urban planning is sort of an in-between kind of thing and I really enjoyed it a lot. And I never really thought, the way things are working out now, it seems that I'm sort of the breadwinner and my boyfriend is not - I sort of had the idea I would work for a bit, and then get married and then maybe work part-time and then, you know just to sort of supplement things

The next person responded to the question of whether she worked primarily for the pay cheque, by referring to an earlier job where money was central motivation. Individuals who thought of a position this way always related monetary motivation as central only when it was due to negative characteristics of the job or workplace.

> P. I used to be like that [working mainly for the money] about 11 years ago when I was a reporter up north, - I worked 7 days a week, 12 hours a day, and I realized, my life was just passing me by. I got very very sick, and they took it off my cheque two days before Christmas - he took it off my cheque, I was in the hospital, just about had my face blown off with an abscessed tooth, and I think that really ripped me up to think that you know I'm not ever doing this to myself again, 'cause I'm the only one that would suffer and in the meantime I have no life left, so I never did that again.

At the level of the individual, what we may refer to as the work ethic as motivation, is not perceived as oppressive or constraining and there remains plenty of room for interpretation. This shows dynamic agency rather than passive acquiescence, as Rose (1985:140-141) explains, and these changes differ among different kinds of workers.[8]

> Evidence for any widespread adoption of such *value* patterns does not exist, though economic stress encourages closer compliance, based on calculation, with work discipline....White-collar or professional workers may well have been actuated more often in the past by some economic values, such as work-centeredness, approximating to [the work ethic]. Signs of lower work commitment amongst such groups does not, however, demonstrate disenculturation resulting from a move towards a post-fabricative ('post-manufacturing') economy. Rather, it reflects a redistribution of value priorities relevant to work, a long-term renegotiation of such value-stresses as 'achievement' or 'success,' and a shift in responsiveness to various kinds of rewards or types of control in the workplace. Analogous processes have been modifying the work values of blue-collar employees, but at different rates.
>
> (Rose 1985:140-141)

As Rose (1985:54) notes, Marx commented on materialism as a way of life in terms of self-actualization, and predicted that ."..existing institutions, and particularly those associated with capitalist industrialism, block the greater part of innate human potentiality, and must therefore be supplanted by others that will permit the full growth of spontaneous creativity and sensuous enjoyment of existence." In chapters four and five, it became apparent that, rather than "blocking creativity and innate potential," it is precisely within the specific workplace that this creative potential can be objectively realized.

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[8] This strongly reinforces the diachronic relationship between individual agents and contexts, in their both being shaped and shaping contexts and environment, that is central to Bourdieu's elaboration on the collective habitus (1977, 1984) that forms the basis for the theoretical approach adopted here.. Specifically in relation to work-related values and attitudes, George and Jones (1997:404-405) express it this way: "The experience of work also is affected by the situation, however, broadly defined to include actions and events encountered in everyday life as well as a wide variety of contextual factors such as social influence from culture, groups and co-workers. Environmental events and conditions so can effect the work experience including the hierarchical structuring of a society (e.g in terms of social class), dominant political ideologies, the state of the economy, and social norms and customs. *Importantly, it is the interaction of the person and situational factors which determine how work is experienced....*" [*emphasis mine*]

Marx (1848:47) also predicted that in a market economy, the increased specialization of labour and the distancing of the worker from the actual product of their labour, would lead to alienation of the employed from the product. This also has not occurred, and the opposite has become reality; the Western world is imbued with materialist values. This is largely due to the effects of mass-marketing and other strategies, which Marx could not predict. These mass-mediated marketing strategies make products more available, and promote an *imagined sense* of close association with products, which are objectifiably obtainable largely through work. This is highlighted in the widely studied phenomenon of western consumerism, the most striking example of materialist ideology. Although none of my participants stated that their main motivation to value their work was the pay cheque, they did have a lot to say about the importance of the ability to consume, in terms of the ability to secure and maintain a particular *lifestyle*.

[3] Consumerism: An Everyday Secular Ritual

Consumerist ethics, values and beliefs were apparent during the industrial revolution in Europe, as early as the thirteenth century according to Thorsen, who cites Hobbes as evidence.

> ...In any event, Hobbes provided a description that was distinctive, because it sought to picture man as fit for a new science of government which proceeded not from the notion of structures and inherent limitations upon need but upon the ceaseless generation of needs. The new man, Hobbes stipulated, sought the meaning of life in the "continual progress of the desire from one object to another," rather than in "the repose of the mind."
>
> (Thorsen 1991:8-9)

The following person was very proud to mention the extent of his accumulation of material products, which he expressed in relation to his individuality. He did not mention the contribution of his wife here, who had a consistent income from a highly-paid profession.

> P. I don't know too many guys that are just over 30 years old and have an acreage with a house on it and a motorhome and a boat and all the toys and bells and ah, car and a van at that time, all paid for. And there was 30 or 50 grand at that time sitting in the bank.

This severely underemployed person comments on promoted use of credit cards, creating debt which constrained her ability to be selective when looking for work.

> P. 9 months I was unemployed. I had a number of student loans that I was paying off too. I didn't have much money saved up or anything. The credit cards was up a bit yeah. And so, you get into this rut of "well I'll pay the minimum payment," but then always needing to put that amount back on, like it was to the max limit on the card, so, yeah, it made it tough. And it's still tough, I think we're still trying to pay it off. It was very easy to say "well I have no money right now, I could just take out my Visa." Once you already have one, it's an easy thing to do.
> R. And I think we're encouraged in general, to do that?
> P. Oh yeah, it's free money (sarcastically), until you have to pay for it.

If work can be seen as secular ritual because of the importance of the social reciprocity, self-objectifying feedback and time-organizational aspects of the workplace, so also can consumerism be viewed as a highly complementary secular ritual, as Wright and Snow make clear.

> The ritual quest of the everyday consumer reveals the metaphysics of our high technological society. We believe that progress and individual completion - long the twin goals of Western civilization - are achieved through the consumption of goods and services. Many of us would deny that we, personally, hold such a belief, but most of us behave as though we do. We labour to consume, and we consume in excess of need in order to feel successful, powerful, sexual, or just adequate. Our culture requires that we feel and act this way.
> (Wright and Snow 1980:327)

Fox and Lears (1983:xii) offer further evidence that consumerism is a strong motivation to work. In terms of societal power relations and self-image and presentation, it is really more of a requirement than an ethic, and not democratic in nature.

> Consumer culture is more than the "leisure ethic," or the "American standard of living." It is an ethic, a standard of living, *and a power structure*. Life for most middle-class and many working-class Americans in the twentieth century has been a ceaseless pursuit of the "good life" and a constant reminder of their powerlessness. Consumers are not only buyers of goods but recipients of professional advice, marketing strategies, government programs, electoral choices, and advertisers' images of happiness. Although the dominant institutions of our culture have purported to be offering the consumer a fulfilling participation in the life of the community, they have to a large extent presented the empty prospect of taking part in the marketplace of personal exchange. Individuals have been invited to seek commodities as keys to personal welfare, and even to conceive of their own selves as commodities. One sells not only one's labour and skills, but one's image and personality, too. While the few make decisions about managing society, the many are left to manage their appearance, aided by trained counsellors in personal cosmetics. Leadership by experts and pervasive self-absorption have developed symbiotically in American consumer culture. ...People deserve a more democratic as well as a more affluent way of life.
>
> (Fox and Lears 1983:xii)

The following individual, who had saved money to purchase a house and was laid off shortly afterwards, expressed distress at the fact that her idea of the 'traditional' family model was now seeming unrealizable. Although she was still living on a full monthly wage from her severance package, her boyfriend was also only marginally working, due to the failure of his business. The absence of 'normal' socialized and gendered consumer-related roles were a source of distress for her.

> R. So, now you're in a position where you're the main breadwinner, and it's sort of your house - you saved up for it for a long time, and you don't particularly like that role?
> P. No I don't, I'm not too comfy in it I must admit.
> R. Well I know, but I'm wondering why?
> P. Well I just sort of figured that I could spend my money on my stuff, you know like I could go out and use my money and do things that I wanted to do and things and not have to pay bills with it and do this with it and if I - that was supposed to be his responsibility {we both laugh} That's kind of sexist eh {laughs}.

There are powerful symbolic aspects of paid labour at work here. If both work and consumption belong in the category of Western consumer culture and secular ritual, then the pay cheque is the *mediator*, the symbolic assertion of our ability to consume, *sometimes but not always* beyond our needs. It is another way to anchor, evaluate and present ourselves in society. This person, now unemployed after working in the same field for over two decades, noted the hardships of having to try to change quickly from a lifestyle which was based around the predictability of the earnings.

> R. Well you get used to a certain amount of income?
> P. Yeah.
> R. You base your life around that?
> P. Yeah. We're not down to where we have to eat beans, so, and hopefully we won't have to.
> R. Well, you can afford to go see your daughter, and...
> P. Well, I made those arrangements prior to realizing I wasn't going to get [the severance pay], so I put that on my Visa card, so that was, you know $500 bucks that I'm going to have to spend that I don't have right now, so, that made a difference.
> R. And you can't get a refund on those tickets?
> P. That's right, so I paid about 2 weeks ago, I was waiting to pay until I got my severance, it didn't come through, it didn't come through, I had to get down - the reason I wanted to go this week is that it's her birthday, so I'm kind of her birthday present {laughs}.

The importance of a lifestyle established in relation to the wages is shown by the fact that every one of my participants who received a severance package (3/4 of my research population) placed the money in an RRSP to avoid taxation, and took out, *without exception*, the *same* monthly wage that they were accustomed to. Even though the money could have lasted longer had the monthly withdrawals been lessened, this would have meant a change in consuming lifestyle. None of these people were either able (due to debt payments) or willing, (due to the importance of consumerist-based lifestyles), to undergo this kind of change. The following person, whose severance pay has just expired at the time of the interview, explains his philosophy on the severance pay. This individual felt that becoming unemployed represented sufficient "upheaval," without a concurrent change in lifestyle.

> R. Since you've been laid-off about 12 months now, did you keep your wages almost the same as when you were working?
> P. Yeah, I didn't really - I guess I sort of didn't really even budget myself - should've, but like I did, like I've got a - it lasted me the whole time it was...
> R. So really your lifestyle didn't have to change that much?
> P. Not really, you know, of course you have all this money sitting there, you have to be a bit more wise with it. I was wise with it - I could have probably, ah, yeah, 'cause you're right, I guess I didn't really change my lifestyle, no I didn't, and I probably, looking back now I think I probably should have in some ways, you know, but, everybody kept saying that, um, you know I should be investing all this or, getting out pounding the streets, getting a job, but I didn't want to do it that way, I felt I had enough upheaval in my life that, you know I wasn't going to worry about the money, 'cause the money was there to help me live, not to save it really.

This person also notices that no longer receiving work-related benefits packages is something that was formerly taken for granted, but has a significant effect on their ability to maintain the same lifestyle.

> P. And I found Alberta Health Care, that's a hard thing to keep up because we were so used to not doing that you know, and now it's $90, every 3 months, and it seems like you just pay one and the next one comes {laughs}
> R. So you lost all your benefits?
> P. Yeah.... so that's hard.
> R. Especially after 13 years, you get into a real pattern of [viewing benefits as usual]
> P. Yes.
> R. You don't think about...
> P. Exactly, and you know we didn't even think about it, we just had it all taken care of here and we had good benefits, and all of a sudden you have nothing, and that, you know, that's hard.

Another unemployed person described a few aspects of their household debt load, which is likely quite typical. However, with the loss of even the part-time job that the individual had, this debt load will take on substantially added stresses and significance. Part-time jobs have become essential, in management of such a relatively fragile household income-to-debt ratio.[9]

> R. Do you have big mortgage payments?
> P. Yep. (laughs) much too big
> R. Do you also have car payments?
> P. We have another loan, yeah, and student loans, from when my husband went to school. The other loan is kind of like, .. we ran over, when we did the house so we had to take out another...
> R. A consolidation thing?
> P. A short term loan, yeah, 'cause we ran over our budget, didn't really want to remortgage for that whole, that extra amount, so - but we don't have a car loan actually per se.

Consumption beyond immediate needs is antithetical to the Puritan or Protestant work ethic, which included a strong value on thrift, savings and inconspicuousness in consumption. There seems to be a shift from the formerly attendant values of thrift and savings towards a moral value of spending and acquiring, as an indicator of personal success in the workforce. Also, of course, people enjoy material posessions and consumption, and these patterns become increasingly 'expected' as workplace and lifestyle progressions coalesce. In most cases, both saving and acquiring are involved, but among my participants, household savings were almost always minimal.

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[9] Most of my participants were reluctant to talk about their personal financial situations, especially their levels of debt, so I did not press this issue. According to a statistical paper prepared by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the percentage of dual-earning families has increased from 33% in 1967 to 62% in 1988. In 1991, only 19% of families consisted of the husband as sole earner. The contribution of women is in most cases essential to the maintenance of the household, even though they hold most of the part-time jobs. In 1991, women's earnings accounted for an average of 29.9% of all family earnings. Also in 1991, wives earned more than husbands in 22.6% of dual-income families. Without the contribution of women's wages, the percentage of dual-income families that fall below the established Canadian 'poverty-line' would have risen from 4.1% to 15% in 1991. (Lero and Johnson 1994:12-13) Female participants in my study, who were part of a dual-income household, indicated that their wages consisted of between 1/4 to over 1/2 of the household income, which roughly coincides with Lero and Johnsons (1994:12) findings.

[3a] Consumption, The Self and Society

It is not unusual for middle-class people to be living with debt payments that are very close to the maximum that their incomes can sustain. The dramatically-increasing trend towards dual-income families indicates a desire to maintain a certain valued standard of living, along with the necessity of this dual income in order to simply deal with the demands of such things as child-raising and other expenses (Lero and Johnson 1994).

Some of my participants did have substantial amounts of money put away, as the following person indicates. However, upon becoming unemployed with substantial money set aside, it is tempting for these people to go into business for themselves, which can often mean taking high risks to capitalize these ventures. The following person is looking back to the money they had set aside proudly, again indicating the valuing of consumer products. However, this person later lost everything they had in a business venture. Also, his spouse owned two very profitable businesses.

> P. I had, uh, a pretty reasonable settlement - 6 months salary or something like that, [roughly $30,000] but I also had a pretty big chunk of money in the bank then, for 10 years or so - you know I was looking at buying brand new Mercedes for cash - I'd been very very good over the years at handling cash, and ah, house all paid for, I owned a motorhome, everything, all the toys and bells you could possibly think of.

By contrast, this woman asserts that she can easily adjust her consumption patterns, and the advantages this personal characteristic provides. However, while still receiving severance pay, this person also took the *same monthly wage* from the package as they had been receiving while working. This would seem to indicate a fairly strong commitment to a certain consumption-based lifestyle that they had been accustomed to after 13 years in the same job. Now this individual is about to make the transition from the severance package monthly wages, to UIC payments (about a 45% cut).

> R. But you're [about to take] a 45% cut, roughly, in income...
> P. That's going to be hard, 'cause I, like I haven't actually got a first cheque, but I know it's going to be really tight, 'cause my rent is $485, you know and then I have a car payment that's $400 {laughs}. Well I can do it, see that's one thing that I'm fortunate with because I'm single, I don't have kids or a husband or anybody else to worry about - so I can live dirt cheap. And like, I've done it before and I can easily do it you know, and it doesn't bother me, 'cause I can change my needs just like that, you know it doesn't bother me at all. I came from a background where we had no money, now, so it doesn't bother me - money isn't a big thing to me, I mean sure I like to have it to be able to do certain things, but, you know, my personality or my life isn't gong to change because I do or don't have any, you know, so....

As Wright and Snow (1980:327) show, not only have Westerners in general developed an association between the 'self' and the 'product,' but this association directly contributes to important aspects of self-perception, such as sexuality, success, power, adequacy and so forth. In this case, both work and consumption become socially anchoring or positioning aspects of the self.

This person illustrates how even part-time work served to structure her self, in relation to a consumption-based lifestyle. This income was reliable, and could be depended upon for basic household necessities, while the spouse in this case, operated a business that, like many small businesses, did not provide a consistently reliable income.

> P. Secretarial work yeah, and it's just ah, it's so hard to adjust - I found it very hard to adjust to being - I was used to going out, I had my 2 days off each week, I worked Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday - I would go in and do my work, then I'd come home and I'd have the last half of the week home, you know, doing whatever I had to do there. But, um, it was a real adjustment, because not only did we move to this house, I also had to adjust to a new home in a new area, that kind of thing. And a new role, as far as just being home, you know, plus getting used to the fact that we didn't have that income that I had brought in to depend upon - we always knew before that that would pay the rent, and groceries you know so we always knew we could cover that.
> R. So if your husband's work was sporadic...
> P It didn't matter, we could depend on mine for sure, we knew that, so we lost all

> that and it was like um, we of course got a severance package, well that basically is gone...

Clearly, even a reliable part-time job can have a significant mediatory quality of providing a social and economic link between the individual, household and the larger society. The workplace position provides a specific occupationally-related positioning of the 'self' and household, in relation to a highly segmented society. It is also clear that there is a significant confluence of work and consumerist ethics, which is a sort of 'natural' combination, since they are both so integrated with a certain lifestyle, which represents an objectified 'presentation' of so many aspects of the self.

[3b] Ritualized Consumerism and the 'Moral Elite'

As Bird (1980:20) suggests, the ritualistic quality of work and consumerism, or any other aspect of western society that has become encoded in ritual, is in itself now akin to an ethic.

> ... ritual codes are now like scripts for dramas. The aim of ritual action is to act as closely as possible in ways that approximate these stereotyped scripts. Acting in conformity with the scripts is considered to be *intrinsically* rewarding. The focus of attention hence is on adhering to the given form rather than on the consequence of these actions.
>
> (Bird 1980:20 [*emphasis mine*])

It is also interesting that Campbell (1987:215) shows that it is no longer collective membership in societal institutions like the church that is central to moral self-evaluation or evaluation of others. Neither is it the wholly secularized notion of emulating the economic elite, but rather the general desire to emulate what is thought of as a *moral* elite, or as he puts it, "the elect." Because work and consumption are now moral activities, morality pervades the socio-economic sphere, moral character qualities parallel socioeconomic situations, and consequently the economic elite 'become' the *moral* elite. This means that the hedonistic pursuit of economic success 'becomes' the pursuit of moral excellence. What was formerly a religious pursuit, is now a socio-economic pursuit imbued with religiosity in the form of moral association and ritualistic means.

Consumerism can then be viewed as moral ideology, a striving for moral excellence, morally motivated activity at the individual level. When it is viewed this way, then budgeting may also be seen as a ritualistic, even morally-charged activity, adding to the felt responsibility. This person has a strong perception that being the primary monetary provider is accompanied by being the primary money-manager, and this person would rather not be in either of those positions.

> R. What do you worry about, that your money's going to run out and then what?
> P. No, not too much , just that.... well.... I would feel better if he was working. {definite} If he was working then I wouldn't feel too bad at all, - to me, being in the type of position where you're then main person supporting someone else - I have to think "well, should we buy this thing this month", or this and that or -- then when he goes and buys, spends money on extra little things I start to say "well wait a minute now" - how can you do that when we have this to pay for and, you know if he was making money too, then I wouldn't worry so much about it I'd say "yeah, do it you know, you enjoy it and OK " but now I'm just "oh, I don't know."
> R. So you're kind of the budgeter?
> P. Yeah, yeah, the nitpicker.

Work and consumption (and not always, but sometimes budgeting as well) take on such moral character-affirming qualities, to the extent that an analogy can be made between this ideology and that found within most religions (as moral achievements)[10]. However, unlike most religions, consumerism as a moral ideology is centred around the individual rather than the community. It is individual social positioning that is sought, individual 'moral' achievement, individual desire to emulate the "elect" or "moral" (re: economic) elite. One person who had worked among professionals for 13 years makes the observation that these "moral elite" may in fact be the ones most 'devastated' upon sudden unemployment, since they had been the ones most caught up in the consumerist ideology, and the material goods which their work could be converted into.

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[10] In this sense, it appears that consumerism, rather than the work ethic alone, is much closer to comprising a modified version of Weber's association of work with religiosity.

> R. Because the ones that were in a lot of debt, and didn't see it coming...
> P. Devastating, and you know, some of those, those are usually the ones whose whole identity was in work, because they were used to , you know, whether they wanted to be honest about it or not, "I have this and I have that" - a great big stinkin' house or these cars and "I travelled all over the world" and then all of a sudden you can't do those things and they're devastated -- well then obviously your identity was in all that.

This individual desire to accumulate, to work towards accumulation, in the name of moral character (another form of social positioning), represents the heart of the modern work and consumerism ethic or ideology. Because moral character is affirmed by work and accumulation, representations of the 'ultimate moral elite' take on the form of material icons. These icons are not associated with religion, but with many of the moralistic properties usually characterising some form of religiosity. They are symbols used to display indicators of the self, and to maintain lifestyles which, in themselves, are 'conspicuous,' and societally-positioning.

[3c] The Moral (Economic) 'Elite,' and Separation of the Self From Society

As Campbell points out (1987:215), the separation of the self and society, that he notes happening in the first part of the nineteenth century, (1987:194) necessitated some means of individually recognizable positioning (in the form of "character affirmation") of this individualistic self. This meant that work morally valued in itself was transformed into work as the general 'means' towards a morally-imbued consumption, changing the work ethic as it was originally developed.

> The concept of character forms a common thread running through the multitude of modern vocabularies which are applicable to human actions. Used to refer to that aspect of behaviours for which individuals accept responsibility, it *enables all action to be viewed as moral, with judgements made about the 'goodness' of each individual actor in the light of prevailing ideals.* It is not suggested here, however, that it is people's direct desire to 'do the good thing' which is most affected by changes in conceptions of the good, the true and the beautiful, so much as *the indirect effort exerted via the need for character conformation.* It is the need that people have to be convinced that they are good which is crucial, something which is especially relevant in the case of those social groups who have inherited a tradition of moral inner-direction, and hence are attuned to the importance of membership in a moral elite, or 'elect.'
>
> (Campbell 1987:215 [*emphasis mine*])

In the light of Campbell's observations, it is easy to see why Rose (1985) prefers to use the term 'work ethic' without any attendant formal religious association. As Campbell shows, moralistic qualities which were formerly associated with religious concepts, become universally applicable when the self is 'separated' from society. Then individual *character* becomes a paramount value, not in relation to religious precepts, but generally in relation to adequacy as a consumer. It also becomes more apparent why Wright and Snow (1980) assert that consumerism has become ritualized, and a ritual in itself. When both work (as the means to consume) and consuming become imbued with moral character and related social positioning qualities, they begin to centre around (and are used to represent) perceived *characteristics of the self.*

Individual expectations regarding progression and development are also very much linked to the ability to work and consume. The unemployed may often feel that this progression and individual development have been curtailed upon unemployment. The next person has become unemployed, is living on severance package wages, and further, her partner's business has been unsuccessful, so he is severely underemployed. She shows how this situation has affected the way in which she views her lifestyle progression.

> P. I guess one of the things was too, we um, we've been going out for 6 1/2 years, and he wanted to wait until [his] business went [it went under], until we decided we were going to do anything and I lived at home and he lived at home, so we finally decided well, sell this business, get a job you know, we bought the house and I sort of felt like my life was progressing, and now... because it's such a long time that I lived at hom[illegible]d all my friends had moved out and everything but I was saving money for this house and, so I finally got my life going,. and now it's sort of [stopped]. It feels like, you know? I'm going to be 29, and it's just not what I had expected my life to be. But I'm much better off than a lot of people, but um, yeah it's just kind of frustrating. I want to get on with the way I think things should be.

One of the main factors in the more recent development of this moralistically conceptualized consumerism has to do with the incredible development of mass-mediated promotion of consumerism. The industrial revolution may have begun an increasing level of the separation of the self from society, individual alienation, and a segmentation of society, that was noted by social scientists such as Weber, Durkheim and Marx. However, in recent days the dramatic effect of the mass-media, especially that of television, is promoting a consumerist-based 'cure' to these problems. Two main 'solutions' looked at in the next sections are the promotion of consumerist-morality, as making the individual self feel better, and the promotion of the idea of the 'consumer community,' or individuals being united in a sense of community through the consumption of the same kinds of or even specific brand-name goods. Both of these 'solutions' are central to the epistemological basis of advertising and promotion, as well as to the symbolic connection between the self, workplace position, and consumption-based lifestyles.

[3d] Mass-Mediated Morality of Consumption

The "sacramental power" of images, or icons, that Goethals (1981:36-37) sees as being removed from the religious domain and appropriated by mass media, especially television, is most strikingly noticeable as these icons or images are used in commercials to promote products and consumerism. Symbolic associations[13], such as those having to do with sexuality, beauty, and power, with a wide range of products like cars and even beer drinking and cigarette smoking has long been in evidence. Female (and now male too) models are used to imply that buying and using these products will 'attract' these kinds of people, who are really icons of consumerism. These icons, in the form of visual images in commercials, are used to promote the idea that consumption of virtually anything amounts to the acquisition of morality, sexuality, power, beauty, cleanliness and so forth. Marsden (1980:120) goes even further than Goethals in making the analogy between television and religiosity - he actually conceives of television as analogous to a deity.

> One of the classic scholastic attributes of God was omnipresence, a quality which in turn became an operative definition. Given the penetration level of television receivers in the Western world, it would seem to be quite logical to extend the argument and suggest that television has taken on some god-like qualities, not the least of which is omnipresence...Television viewing is not an activity; it is a way of life, an electronic creed.
>
> (Marsden 1980:120)

Another function of icons is to objectify elusive elements of culture. They are (Goethals 1981:33) "special examples of a symbolic form that is used for the objectification of beliefs and for self-transcendence." Because of the individualistic distinction between the self and society which Campbell (1987) noted, there is a need for self-transcendence that is no longer provided solely by religious beliefs. Being surrounded by diverse, abstract, impersonal and often contradictory cultural beliefs, the use of images or icons on television provides a simpler and more understandable 'belief system'; objectified, packaged and presented through images on television. The power of material icons is so strong that it has long become a favourite tool of the politician in acquiring votes. According to this person, citizens are easily led to believe that increased capital expenditures represents the 'good life,' and political expectations being lived up to.

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[13]

> P. What [politicians] did is they blew our money on that, and now we have these white elephants, lets not call them hospitals, because we have a hospital in every little town in the province and a lot of them are going to close. They're all expensive, but that's part of our society - we had the belief, and that was part of our expectations during the 60s, 70s, is that we would have the best of all worlds. You know if I lived down in say High River, my expectations were that I would have the same facilities as the people in Darkwater, and Darkwater would have the same health facilities as [larger cities] - now that was our expectations, and the politicians fulfilled those expectations to their ability spending our money 'till it bankrupted us and now they say "whoops we've made a mistake." I could find it very easy to blame the politicians, but I think that the stupidity of that whole era wasn't just the politicians, it was our expectations.

Our mass-mediated consumer society has produced material expectations which are so high that even the folk belief includes a definition of these expectations as fiscally irresponsible. This is the main grassroots opinion that led to the election of the Klein administration in Alberta, with a presented position of 'fiscal responsibility.' This is one of the extreme positions created by the mass-mediated 'consumption-as-redemption' philosophy,[14] as Goethals notes.

See Deegan (1987) for an interesting discussion of what she calls (1987:5) "media-constructed rituals."

14

> On [one] level, the news informs, commercials sell products, and sit-coms and sports entertain. There is, however, a much deeper level on which these images operate: all television images... provide the American public with fundamental rituals and myths. Much of what people think about the "good life," the roles of men and women, technology, or the changing patterns of family and political life emerges from the television set. On a deeper level, the television mediates and reinforces public symbols; it also, however, can trivialize myths and ritual, reducing them to a kind of ornate emptiness.
>
> (Goethals 1981:2)

Television acts as a mediator between the self and society, in much the same way that workplace participation does. Television is effective through the objectification of beliefs; and making cultural ideologies 'tangible,' at a time when the 'self" often feels somewhat divorced from the society-as-community.

When society is highly diversified, and segmented in many ways, central conceptual divisions such as the category of 'working and unemployed' become very important, as shown in above sections. Similarly, distinctions which can identify individuals, either subjectively or in objectively presentable/visual ways, also become important. They can both signify individuality, at the same time as they can indicate 'membership' in a consumer-community, based not on social relations as much as on perceived similar characteristics, priorities and values.

[3e] 'Belonging' Through Specific Consumption: The "Consumer-Community"

Note: Many of my participants alluded to the influence of the media and promotional campaigns directed towards increased consumption. However, these remarks were made

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For a good examination of the role of advertising, consumer education and associated aspects of mass-mediated consumerism, see the Journal of Social Policy (1977, Nov./Dec.), as this issue is devoted to exploring such issues. More recent research on this subject includes Bostyn and Wight (1987); Berger (1987); Macfarlane (1987); Miller (1987) and Nava (1991). As Nava says (1991:157) "Consumerism has been a powerful and evocative symbol of contemporary capitalism and the modern western world. Indeed, in the climate of 1991, faced by the crisis of the environment and the transformations in Eastern Europe, it is perhaps the most resonant symbol of all. Highly visible, it's imagery permeates the physical and cultural territories it occupies. Modern identities and imaginations are knotted inextricably to it."

mainly in passing, and were not elaborated upon. Participants seemed to feel that media misrepresentation or influence was something to be taken for granted, and not worth thinking about as much more than annoying. From the sparse comments I received, it could be said that these people had become 'desensitized' to mediated consumerism promotion. At the same time, the central importance of maintenance of a certain lifestyle which they had become accustomed to was also quite evident. This section, then, is intended to promote my own hypothesis of the high level of influence of the media towards consumerism, even (and possibly especially) when individuals have become 'desensitized' to the media, and discourse about it is very limited.

The mass-mediated images of the 'consumer-community,' promote the feeling of belonging to a group. It is not social interaction, but the widespread individual participation in the use of popular products that provides this sense of a social 'group.' This sense of belonging is a sort of 'cure' for the potential alienation of the self from a segmented and specialized society. The promotion of all kinds of material goods in the symbolic imagery of joining a consumer-community is a very effective way to market them.[15]

The individual can 'join' any number of presented 'groups' of people. These (symbolic/imagined) groups created through common use of certain products, involve symbolic associations with positively valued icons, and positively perceived values.[16] In watching football, for example, the individual can feel securely 'positioned' knowing that millions of other people are 'with' them, doing the same thing, drinking the same kind of beer, and so forth. The housekeeper can feel secure that they 'belong' to a large group of morally correct people who have certain products on hand to ensure cleanliness of clothes, floors, etc. Individuals can feel a sense of 'belonging,' by wearing the right brand name of jeans, buying certain kinds of cars, and so forth.

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[15] It is the same kind of 'cure' for the same kinds of problems associated with the 'impersonal' concept of nation, as explained in Anderson's (1983) book "Imagined Communities." " There is a positive function of both the nation as imagined, or the similarly imagined consumer-community, and both have to do with a felt sense of communion with others, without necessitating any face-to-face infraction. " [a nation - or consumer-community?] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them. Yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." Anderson (1983:5-6)

[16] Robins (1989:145-146) notes the heightened importance of 'finding community' during times of radical socio-economic change. As he says: " In the present period, we are involved with processes of political and economic restructuring and transformation....the struggle for meaningful communities and 'actual social identities' is more urgent than ever...."

As Hamilton explains about Cohen's (1985) book on community as symbolically-constructed, it does not matter whether or not a 'community' can be geographically bounded. Using Cohen's definition of community, it is shared *symbolic meanings* that are relevant. One of the most powerful icons used on television today is the 'dream home' concept, which is used to encourage people to buy expensive lottery tickets, or work and/or take on large mortgage payments in order to 'join' the select category of people who have objectively realized their 'dream home.' For the suddenly unemployed, a 'dream home' can turn into a serious problem, but it is an icon not easily given up, as the next person shows.

> P. Yeah, we lived in our other place 17 years before we moved here, so this was kind of, you know, we figured we're going to basically end up retiring here, lots of room, when kids start having grandkids, grandchildren and stuff like that, there's lots of room, it's a great place to have the whole family for Christmas and all this sort of stuff - that whole dream was shot to hell. So, with that, um, with not getting a severance, it jeopardizes duplicating this where we're moving, 'cause we have to sell this, and I'm not sure if we're going to get our money out of it,- we should be awfully close, but still, we'll probably be building a new house and, now I have, you know, some of my debts have added up a bit so I have, all of that stuff has to be taken care of first, so we are kind of digging a deep hole before we get started again.

As Bennett (1970:92) mentions, if work roles are perceived as undesirable or unfulfilling, they still provide the means to self-presentation through specific consumption patterns, and television has the means to 'help out,' by synthesizing individuality and community.

> Anonymity, however, bothers us. The more our identity is related to roles, the less we think of ourselves as persons. Madison Avenue has seen this and attempts to give us an identity through the individualization of our objects. No man thinks of his Ford Mustang as the copy of a million others or of his split level ranch as anything less than a Ponderosa. But we live in an illusion of nineteenth century romanticism here. Our icons are copies of an archetype which *make us one* in our reverence for them.
>
> (Bennett 1970:92 [*emphasis mine*])

Because of such widespread use of television and other mass media, the western self is not as conceptually divorced from society as Campbell (1987:194) asserts, although it may be largely through consumption that these conceptualized 'communities' exist. The 'communities' created by television and other mass media are so highly symbolically meaningful *rather than socially interactive*. Fundamentally the premise is that since society is so abstract and segmented, everyone wants to feel that they belong to some community, and this need is communicated to and addressed by advertisers.[17] This severely underemployed individual expresses his observations on the consuming patterns of people in general, and an opinion on why middle-class persons tend not to save, and don't want to change their consuming lifestyles.

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[17] Real (1977) describes the role of the mass-media extensively, and on pages 28-29 gives another perspective on what I have been calling the consumer-community. He describes this in broader cultural terms, and goes on to describe the kind of two-way communication that is evidenced through advertising, which would contribute to both the agency of individuals and the sense of consumer-community, also within the fundamental context of the self feeling that they 'belong' to a specific cultural community as well. "Edward Schills argues that societies, by definition, have a central zone of symbols, values and beliefs that govern that society, and that membership consists of relations with the central zone. The thesis is similar to Malinowski's 'principle of totality' in cultures." Real goes on to explain advertising as a form of two-way cultural communication, but notes the different nature of the extent to which mass-media is able to communicate culture to the consumer, while the consumer communicates back through selectively influenced consumption. "Communications, or interaction through messages, is the crucial link between the institutional infrastructure and internal consciousness. Communications, in both mass-mediated and interpersonal forms, conveys 'structures' as well as content from institutions to consciousness and from consciousness to institutions. Advertising, as a genre of communication, transmits messages from commercial producers to consumers for the purpose of influencing internal decision-making concerning product selection. As a system, advertising cumulatively conveys an integrated value structure determining individual and group living. Communication takes place in the opposite direction, from consumer to producer, by the purchase of products and services."

> P. People spend as much as they earn, that's what I always said when I was employed by the oil firm, I spent to the limit of my salary - that's quite common, and a friend of mine once made a comment, he said you know, "what do you think about severance packages for the people that they are letting go in government positions" ... I can speak from experience, because I had the severance package, and I said "they don't make severance packages - pay them you know everything you want to pay them, because generally those severance packages are going right back into the economy, because 10 to 1 the people that [unemployment] happens to go into a state of shock and everything, they don't do anything for a year anyway, and it's spent - and if they do invest it, they probably don't invest it in something they really know about, it's just a panic decision, so it all goes back in the economy - doesn't matter if you give them $1 or $100,000, it's all spent. So it isn't going to hurt the economy any, in fact it's probably beneficial to the economy to give them lots of money, and again you know that's sort of from my experience. That's one of the situations I see, is that they get the severance package and they really warm up over the severance package, and that gives them what they think is breathing space, and of course if that's a year's salary, they sit there for a year and they don't change their lifestyle, and at the end of the year, then they say "whoops, now I'm on UIC," and then when UIC runs out, that's when panic sets in.

As Bennet (1970:53) notes, "anonymity bothers us," and it may be that the importance of the "imagined communities" presented on television serve to replace a deteriorating sense of neighbourhood community. This person had lived in the same house for 17 years, and remarked that household 'isolation' has increased recently due to economic effects and unemployment.

> P. We moved in here, and I can't say truly that after 18 years, we know the people - but there isn't really much communication, unless, unless it has to be, for example, a couple days ago someone broke in down here so the block watch phoned my wife. And then we've got caught up, in recent years, with the slump in the economy, and so, there's a whole bunch of dynamics going on here. We have the retired people who have their own circle, do their own thing, you always say hi and you talk a little bit; then you have *the age group of, say 40-60, to a large extent the husbands aren't working*. So you try to hold on - we've held on very

> well here, and our neighbours have held on very well, but I can see the change in the attitudes because they've got much more private as this has happened.
> R. I was wondering about that too.
> P. Yeah, they've gotten much more private - people don't like things like - [Frank] doesn't like telling me what he's doing.
> R. They don't like to talk about it?
> P. Yeah, and it's happened to me and I don't mind talking, but they don't like talking. So they get very private, but they don't want to change.

Due to this partial isolation, the workplace, occupation, consumption patterns and associated values, provide other social or only symbolic 'communities,' and the individual position can be personally defined. Consumerism as a doctrine then operates along with interpretations of the work ethic, both having the ability to create a sense of objectified social and symbolic positioning, within some form of community. As in any community, belonging has to involve both constraints and choices. The social communities of the workplace may be less constraining than some of the mass-mediated symbolic communities, as most mothers with children who demand certain brand-name goods will know. As Sallach points out in relation to the socializing effects of television and other mass media, watching television is not simply a process of indoctrination towards dominant ideology, it is more of a presentation of *constraints*.

> That the mass media possess potential for the manipulation of the public is not exactly an original insight. As early as 1942, Schumpeter stated, "the ways in which issues and the popular will on any issue are being manufactured is exactly analogous to commercial advertising." However, an emphasis upon the techniques of direct manipulation *obscures* the more pervasive aspect of the relationship between the media and the "mass." Janowitz captures this significant aspect well when he says, " The influence of mass media, supported by networks of interpersonal contacts among opinion leaders, is not in dramatic conversion of public opinion, but rather in setting the limits within which public debate on controversial issues takes place."
>
> (Sallach 1974:168-169 [*emphasis mine*])

'Consumer-communities,' are only realizable to the extent that a certain level of consumption is possible. Pressure to consume in a specific manner is an additional form of pressure and stress on middle-class individuals, both the working and in particular the unemployed. Occupational positions take on added significance, as facilitating consumption or in relation to the work ethic; and especially as potential 'central locales' for the realization of *social community*, as was made clear in chapters four and five in the more specific context of workplace dynamics.

[4] Individual Agency in Conceptually Framing Their Own Situations

Every individual, like ethnographers, creates his or her *own* 'frames' with which to understand their world. This is important to keep in mind when incorporating agency into any discussion of the influences of dominant ideologies. What I have been outlining so far in this chapter could fall under the general heading of 'cultural or ideological scripts,' in the sense that I have been discussing dominant ideological constructs, which are sometimes emphasized more than the agents who practice within these 'umbrella concepts.' However, far more important to the goals of this project is Burman's observation about agents.

> ...what is shaped is not inert. Human's *enacted* social practices, in which are inscribed so many influences, have a life of their own. These practices are carried on by mindful human beings moving ahead in the current of time, evolving understandings and relationships which are new in human history. Of course one of the products of their practices is precisely those unintended consequences that structure future action. But the flow of human action - lived as it is by knowledgeable human agents aging and leaning into time - will never be a mere passive product of causal forces, or a perfect repetition of what came before.
> (Burman 1988:8)

As Burman (1988:8) points out, individuals are not passive receptors but active agents in creating understandings of self and society, manipulating symbols, utilizing ritual and myth and so forth. The individual-as-active participant has the ability to have participatory input and choices within every one of the dominant ideologies, doctrines and media discussed above (or, for that matter, by the principles of social science). In any individual perception of self and society, the relationship between theories, ideologies, doctrines and the individual, or the relationship between the ethnographer and participants, the now surely infamous distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' is inextricably blurred and indefinite.

The following person noted upon being re-interviewed that while in the course of my interviewing I had found her to be very dedicated towards her work, this was not the way that she thought of herself. To her, the amount of dedication she applied to her work seemed normal, proper and thus not 'out of the ordinary.' She was working in a different position now, and was not sure about whether her attitude towards working had really changed due to the experience of unemployment. Also it is obvious that her dedication to her occupational position remains very high.

> P. It hasn't come to the point where there are the same kinds of demands on my time as there was [in her former job]. So I haven't had to make a judgement call and say "I'm not prepared to give you 15 hours today - I am going home at 6:30 because that's enough." Whereas, [in the former job] I always knew that you stay until you're so tired that you aren't productive anymore. And part of it was that no one ever told me what my level of commitment should be, so I'm surprised that you're telling me that my level seemed higher than most. Because I think it's what it should be and is what's expected, and nobody ever tells you that "you're not committed enough." And part of that is personal circumstance too. I wasn't married, and I didn't have the kinds of demands on myself that I would if I was a mother. What most people would call "discretionary time," my discretion was to put that into work. And it was deliberate and I don't know that it was necessarily a

> good choice, but I don't regret that choice. And here there haven't been those kinds of intense demands yet, and I think that they will come. ... When there have been instances when there's been a deadline or a push to get things done, I have no problem in saying "yes I can stay late." It is not a problem to be here late. And actually, I feel better when there are those kinds of demands. I still feel kind of guilty when 4:30 comes - I feel really guilty when 3:30 comes and I'm looking at the clock.

There is a conscious agency and personal choice involved here. Even when this choice may be considered as 'constrained' by work ethic ideology, as it likely would be using a Marxist perspective, for example, it also has a lot to do with self-satisfaction and personal agency. The next person shows this individual agency even more distinctly, again with a very high level of professionalism and commitment.

> P. So I can fill my non-work time with activities that used to be work-related. And I can pick and choose parts of the activities outside of the workplace that give me satisfaction and enjoyment. And I think that the starting point is that I like to feel valuable. When I'm 70 or 80, I want to be able to look back on my life and look at the things that I've accomplished. And I want there to be enough things and enough different things, that I don't want to have to think "I should have done more or I should have tried harder." I do understand the need for balance, and I hope that I'm getting better at achieving that balance. We had the week off, and that was the first time I took a week off since I was in school. Because I always used my time off to clean up the work on my desk because I saw it as a good time when it was quiet in the office.

This individual is aware of other possible choices, as the following person also makes clear, showing that individuals are fully aware of value systems which deviate from what might be thought of as 'the norm,' or the dominant systems. People often consider the relevance of 'alternative' lifestyles that don't follow any strong work ethic or consumerist doctrine.

> P. I bumped into lots of guys, about a half-dozen, working at various gas stations - they used to be big shots in the oil business, management types, and ah, they went through the big layoffs, and they did the thing through the big cities trying to get a job, and no way, and went through the depression and all that, packed it up and

> said "to hell with it" and they moved out to the interior of B.C., live in a bitty little house, have a gas station and, one guy out there at Yahk, he is just thrilled to death - "I've got the best hunting, the best fishing, the most fantastic place to go hiking and, and I don't have anyone around to pester me" {laughs} "I don't make a hell of a lot of money but I have a hell of a great lifestyle."

[5] Chapter Summary

Dominant ideologies may be constraining and even oppressive, and a certain degree of social and ideological constraints are universal elements of every society. At the same time, these broad constraints can be 'tools' in expanding choices and thus creating of lifestyles which are objectifiable through comparison at the individual level. Now that some basic ideological premises have been outlined, in chapter eight I will discuss aspects of stigma and marginality in relation to unemployment. Examining these along with interview quotes sheds further light on the relative effects of some of the general as well as individual understandings.

The position taken here is that there is a distinct relationship between felt effects of stigma and marginality, and ideological as well as specific personal frameworks. These negative experiences have to be contextualized in multiple, overlapping levels; in every case, keeping in mind the importance of individual agency in framing experiences. Similar to the importance of specific occupational, positional and workplace characteristics, experiences of unemployment have to be seen as related to specifically-construed losses.

At the same time, this and the next two chapters are intended to show that dominant ideologies, and the dichotomizing of categories of the working and unemployed, into generalized characterizations, are sure to have a broad effect on the individual experience of unemployment. As important as it is to give an in-depth consideration to the personalized meaningfulness of a specific occupational and workplace position, it is equally important to take into account the effects of ideological oppositions on the self-perceptions of the individual. This is another interactive process of meaning creation; certainly the individual as an active agent has the power to affect and even alter their contextual environment, as I have demonstrated using the specific workplace as context. In a similar fashion the construction of meanings proceeds in interaction between the agent and the societal environment – in this case the context is vastly larger and perceived as rather remote – not in meaningfulness, but in the agent's perceptions of empowerment to effect change. It is this feeling of relative lack of power that makes these ideological constructions and categorizations effective in self-assessment; the individual often tends to impose their own constraints on their being able to feel positive self-worth, by 'importing' the assessments of the majority, which are thought to be embodied in moralizing ideology.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

STIGMA AND MARGINALIZATION: EFFECTS ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS IN GENERAL

In this chapter, I examine the effects of stigma and marginality, two of the most widely used concepts in experiential descriptions of unemployment. This chapter is divided into three main sections. I first outline some of the ways in which stigmatization is only possible in conjunction with the internalization of certain dominant societal values and perceptions. Included in this section are discussions of the importance of feedback from a relevant 'audience,' and the maintenance of social interaction, in relation to positive self-perceptions. I also examine some of the stigmatic effects produced when there is a loss of 'audience,' or a lack of positive feedback and socially-reinforcing interaction.

In the second section, I concentrate on marginalization, or peripheralization, mainly in the context of the negative conceptualization of the unemployed as an unproductive societal category. This category is often perceived as not 'belonging' within society, since members of this category are often assigned characteristics that are antithetical to perceived characteristics of members of the productive category of the employed. In this section, the mass media is shown to play a strong role in creating this strict conceptual boundary, which contributes to stigmatization through a distortion of societal context.

In the third section, I take a closer look at the contextual awareness expressed by my participants. Contextual awareness is looked at to determine whether it helps modify the stress of unemployment. I show that it does not seem to make a large difference, since my participants identified so personally with the specific occupation and workplace situations.

Specific situations rather than more macroscopic context appears to be much more salient to the unemployed individuals who participated in my study.

[1] Stigmatization and Dominant Societal Values

Stigmatization is inextricably linked to the predominating social values - without a dominant set of social values with which to compare and contrast social categories or individual characteristics, there could be no stigmatization at all. As Goffman notes, the effectiveness of stigmatization by others varies directly with the extent to which the stigmatized individual *shares* the same values as those who are giving them this type of negative feedback.

> The stigmatized individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that [non-stigmatized people] do; this is a pivotal fact. ...Further, the standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for moments, to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be. Shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual's perception of his own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess, and one that he can readily see himself as not possessing.
> (Goffman 1963:5)

Because stigma is felt especially strongly by people who share the larger, general social values, stigmatization is very appropriate in a study of job loss. People in this situation can stigmatize themselves, by perceiving that they now belong to a social stratum which they believe is 'beneath' their own as well as societal expectations. Of course there is great individual and situational variation; but most unemployed individuals will go to great lengths to avoid feeling stigmatized by themselves or others. This is why studies about unemployment (Wadel 1973; Newman 1989; Howe 1990) frequently mention that unemployed people try to maintain their previous occupationally-based conceptions of self for long periods of time, even when it means avoidance of other people that could potentially give them positive feedback. Howe mentions this directly.

> ...[when] an individual becomes stigmatized late in life, and has therefore learnt all about the normal and the stigmatized long before he sees himself as deficient. What is interesting about this process is that the individual has to negotiate a new identity and a new set of relationships, both with those he had known previously and those with whom he will come into contact with as a result of the stigma...What is important in the context of this present study is that the stigma is not physically identifiable, is conceived to be temporary, and is usually reversible. This means that the unemployed man has powerful motives to prevent his old identity and old relationships from being irrevocably altered, since these will need to be re-established once he regains work ...It is for these reasons that the unemployed man so often emphasizes the fact that his unemployment is an interruption of normal life... For the same reasons, he talks a great deal about his past work experiences, stressing how he could still work if only he was given an opportunity.
>
> (Howe 1990:164)

Due to the complexity of trying to 'hang on' to a former non-stigmatized work-related identity, there is intricate variation in the ways in which this is attempted. One possibility is to resist entering the stigmatized social category of benefits-receiver, or 'parasitical taker.' People will go to some extremes here, such as the following professional, who was not collecting unemployment insurance, even though he was fully entitled to it, and had paid into the plan for over two decades.

> R. I was wondering, just out of my own curiosity, because if I got laid off and they didn't give me a severance package, the first thing I'd do is go down to U.I.C. (the person being interviewed would qualify for $1,400/mo)
> P. Well, I don't know - I've got the U.I.C. forms, and I've got them filled out, and I was hoping I wouldn't have to do that, and apparently you can go to U.I.C. and whatever U.I.C. you get, um, would basically be deducted (from severance when he got it) minus some, well, some other money, like you might not have to pay the whole thing back. So I could, still get some U.I.C.

Receiving financial assistance from the government in the western world can 'automatically' put a person in a highly stigmatized position, including assigning the benefits receiver morally-deficient qualities, as Waxman (1977:71) makes clear.

> We shall see that in the judgement of the members of the society, one's being a recipient of certain types of assistance is seen as sufficient evidence that the individual is morally defective, not to be trusted and should be constrained in some way by society. Receipt of services of some types may be sufficient visibility to have oneself labelled, and perceived of, as being disreputably poor or, at least, stigmatized.
>
> (Waxman 1977:71)

Another unemployed professional had no qualms at all about collecting U.I.C. benefits after his severance pay had been used. This person rationalized that all the U.I.C. premiums he had paid over 22 years of employment were insurance premiums, meant to be used when needed. Note that this person makes a distinction between welfare and U.I.C. It is highly improbable that he would have felt as justified in collecting welfare. There is a spectrum of morally-laden perspectives from people in very similar situations.

> P. Well I'm going onto UIC in mid-December I guess.
> R. You don't feel bad about that?
> P. Hell no. I paid into it for 22 years (UIC). As far as I'm concerned I should be able to go on it for 2 years {laughs}. It isn't welfare, and that's what it's there for, is to help you out in those times, it's insurance.

One of the survivors of the layoffs expressed a similar reaction to the possibility of having to collect U.I.C. if he became unemployed. He added that in his view, Alberta provincial policies are too repressive in this matter.

> P. Well no, [I wouldn't have any qualms about collecting UIC] because, for me, that's what it's there for. It's there for me, when there are tough times, and when I've got to do it, I've got to do it. It wouldn't bother me a bit. Because it's mine. And Alberta's actually a tough place for that, it's like an American system. It goes back to values. It's like the hockey players, when they go on strike, I don't mind that, because there's a system to deal with that.

This variety is due to aspects of self-perceptions that are the result of constant reflexive interaction between the agent and societal values, in the same way that individual agency and workplace and occupational environments have the ability to shape each other.

[1a] Stigma and the Importance of Social Feedback

During unemployment, feedback from others is also diverse. It may involve sarcastic non-acceptance of the situation itself and the person involved, (often contributing to that person's felt or actual isolation) to attempts at helping ranging from genuine, paternalistic or 'invasive' (in the minds of either or both parties). The avoidance of stigma by hanging onto a previous identity would seem to be one of the most optimistic scenarios, where a person continues to have a supportive audience, as well as being able to refuse to believe that the situation is anything but a temporary setback.

Newman (1989:2-5) points out that this is possible only to an extent, and this ability depends to a high degree upon household economic circumstances, and the ability to maintain social reciprocity. In the western world, middle-class professionals are generally highly specialized, usually maintaining a significant household debt and without readily accessible savings. (The person who was going into selling mutual funds told me that the majority of his business came from retirees.) The ability to maintain a previous identity, and retain the belief that the situation is temporary, may not last very long at all. Drastic consequences often occur soon after the job loss, and in relation to stigma, one central consequence is usually the loss of a supportive audience.

> After a while David stopped calling his friends, and they ceased trying to contact him. Having always been sociable people, David and Julia found it hard to cope with the isolation. But with no good news to share, they didn't really feel like seeing old acquaintances. Friendship in their old circles revolved around outings to fancy restaurants, dances at the country club, and the occasional Broadway show or symphony in New York City. [Their] budget simply could not sustain these luxuries anymore.
>
> (Newman 1989:3)

Howe (1990:164-165) described the ability to maintain former self-conceptions, and have an audience composed of both old friends and new people in the same situation; but this ability was strongly linked to a high level of chronic unemployment in the area. Newman describes a completely different situation among middle-class professionals, in which social isolation becomes the pattern after job loss. Individuals do have a wide range of choices in how not to perceive themselves as joining a stigmatized category; from resisting benefits, to viewing them as non-stigmatic collection of insurance. The next person reinforces Newman's observation of the change in perception of audience and feedback which can lead to self imposed isolation, due to extreme feelings of stigmatization. This person felt that they had lost their audience very quickly, upon 'joining' the stigmatized category of the unemployed.

> P. Right when I got laid-off, there was just steady people being laid-off um.... with..... I was going to say... another thing that I've found is that people here still employed start to avoid you like the plague, because it brings them down - they don't want to associate with you - some people can see beyond it, but some people they're afraid of you -it's contagious, if I'm not in then I'm going to get it too or whatever. And you're treated differently too - I could go down where I used to work, and have a coffee with people, but I avoided it, because, there were many reasons but, just lately I've been starting to go down there once in a while, just to see them, and pick a few things up that they wanted me to and, and it's uh, they treat you differently and uh, like as if you... you know there's no.....ah..... no respect, from certain individuals.

As Newman remarks (1989:3) this isolation can even be felt as a relief to the families involved, since they are no longer financially able to participate in social events and reciprocate in things like dinner parties. On the other hand, when a person quickly realizes that reciprocity in social events is no longer possible, they are forced to acknowledge that they have moved downwards in their and others' social estimation of self-worth.[9]

[1b] Stigma, Loss of Audience and Isolation

After becoming unemployed, the maintenance of a previous work-related identity that Howe (1990:164) speaks of cannot be possible without certain resources[10], the central one being an audience for positive feedback. Even within the nuclear family, self-esteem is very closely tied to economic success. Unemployment can change the nature of a nuclear family unit that has become isolated in any variety of the 'spectrum' of audience loss.

> Downward mobility interferes with the ability of parents and children to retain the kind of relationship that their middle-class culture deems natural, normal, and ordinary. It makes it hard for parents to be leaders because parental authority springs from financial control and the illusion of invulnerability.
> (Newman 1989:108)

Individuals may be able to retain an audience of former peers[11] as well as sympathetic people in the same situation, or become isolated partly by choice due to embarrassment or lack of the ability to reciprocate in social situations. People may even find the predominant sources of stigmatization within the family unit. When a person had worked in a highly social specific workplace environment for such a long period of time, loss of the social audience in the workplace is immediate, and may have constituted the individual's primary centre for social interaction. Both the attempt to retain a former work-related identity, and the self- or externally imposed isolation, have to do with dominant social value systems and individual circumstances.

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[9] There is still a strong connection between feelings of stigma related to self-worth and the still predominating cultural association of the moralistic qualities of paid labour, and the demoralization associated with unemployment. Smucker (1994:40), puts it this way: ."..what was once a problem of persuading people to submit to the discipline of a regimented paid labour force has become one of providing a sufficient number of jobs for those needing them, not only for economic reasons, but for social and moral ones as well. ... The idea of a productive citizen embodying a moral virtue has had a long tradition in western culture, but with industrialization, the expression of this virtue has centred almost wholly on paid employment. ...Not to be employed implies either a lack of moral virtue or "character" or the absence of opportunity to acquire these attributes."

[10] Wadel (1973) provides a good account of the intricate ways in which the unemployed individual is not powerless in relation to the audience, but employs intricate strategies and manoeuvres to 'manipulate' their audience.

[11] Retaining an audience of peers or colleagues can be very difficult in situations where individuals had placed both their work-related and socially-interactive selves within the domain of the specific workplace from which they were now dislocated. When the occupational position was so highly social as well, and occupied both a lot of time spent in the workplace, along with a high amount of socializing, after twenty years or so in this same pattern, isolation upon becoming unemployed cannot always be thought of as self-imposed. In these cases, unemployment meant dislocation from the locus of the individual's social as well as occupational activities.

Stigma and stigmatization operate, by definition, in a dialectical sense; in a two-way process of feedback and individual reassessment of self. These are both affected by the intensity of historical and continuing socialization and internalization of dominant societal standards.[2] Page (1984:1) provides a definition of stigma which suits this dynamic reflexive framework.

> Whether it is a visible mark or an invisible stain, stigma acquires its meaning through the emotion it generates within the person bearing it and the feeling and behaviour toward him by those affirming it. These two aspects of stigma are indivisible since they *each* act as a cause or effect of the other.
> (J. and E. Cumming, in Page 1984:1)

Feeling of stigma may also come from unexpected sources. This person identified what would usually be considered as a primary support group as also being the main source of stigmatic feedback.

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[2] Socialization towards extrinsic and intrinsic positive valuation of work begins early in life in western society. Although work-related values are taught by parents to their children as part of the 'growing-up' process, the following study of adolescent individuals who had part-time work experience indicates that socialization towards positive work-related values becomes heightened upon experience in a 'real' workplace setting. "Despite being employed largely in jobs of low status and complexity, adolescents still gain a sense of appropriate developmental progress from learning new skills, sufficient to develop stronger intrinsic value orientations. Opportunities to develop job skills fostered stronger extrinsic values as well." (Mortimer, Pimentel, Ryu, Nash and Lee (1996:1414).

> R. So your confidence went down when you were unemployed?
> P. Yeah it did.
> R. You also mentioned that you feel that the unemployed are stigmatized?
> P. Yeah, they are, yeah.
> R. And you've sort of joined a group of people that are looked down upon?
> P. It had to do with the [church] group that I was in too; there were a lot of old ladies, and they're not, you know, most of them never even worked, let alone been out of a job.
> R. So it's easy for them to look down on the unemployed ?
> P. Yeah!!

At the individual level, prior stigmatization by workers of people on assistance due to joblessness as Waxman (1977:71) describes would have serious consequences for the downwardly mobile. There would be not much hope of successfully maintaining a formerly work-related positive sense of self, when a person is put immediately into a situation which they themselves had labelled as a group with a negative stigma. These individuals briefly outline their recollections of attitudes towards the unemployed in two different workplaces.

> R. In your workplace, what kinds of feelings did the people, and maybe you, have in general about the unemployed?
> P. I think the attitude that I felt, whether this is right or not, but what I felt was that um, unemployment was somebody else's problem, and these fellows that were there, they all made big money, you know you're talking $55,000, so it's very easy to be pious you know. And I did feel that, before we started getting the cuts, that anyone who was unemployed, well, you're just a bum or you're not a good worker or there's a reason for it. In the person.
>
> R. Like "I have a job, so anybody could have a job?"
> P. Yes I think so, or, well " I looked for 2 weeks and I found a job," and they may have just been very lucky at that point in time. So I think that once you're working, you feel that there has to be jobs out there for people, and that people could find something to do.

One person described the alienation she felt when she noticed that working people were not able to understand the difficulties of maintaining structured motivation when unemployed. In her opinion, working people have a hard time recognizing that the unemployed can have structured days without working. This would severely limit the ability to maintain any form of work-related identity.

> P. For people who have jobs, - we talked about structure before and I want to get back to it - for people who have reasons to get up in the morning, and start doing things, that have the kind of structure to their days, can't quite understand how you can't keep that structure when you don't have a job anymore.

In a very real sense, some job losers 'place' themselves in a stigmatized position 'created' by themselves and their peers. It is no wonder that some people in this situation choose to isolate themselves and hide from the rest of society. As much of the research about unemployed people shows, (Wadel (1973); Newman (1989) Burman (1988); Howe (1990) along with the evidence given by many of the people with whom I spoke, avoidance of contact with others is quite common, and directly relates to self-conscious awareness of their stigmatized categorization. As this person notes, even good-natured attempts at sympathetic responses from a support group can make people feel uncomfortable, especially when they have internalized the stigma of unemployment. Although this person's lifestyle has not changed so far, since she is still receiving the severance package, unforeseeable circumstances may come to be felt as 'stupidities' on the part of the person who feels stigma.

> P. Well, it's just, I guess the stigma attached to it - and it's so funny too because I have just bought a house, and I belong to [a women's church group], and we've had a couple of meetings, and "congratulations, you've just got your house" - I feel like such an idiot and then I go and say oh I was just laid off and everyone just.. "ooh, you poor dear, what are you going to do?" You just kind of feel like, I don't know you just hate saying it to people like...
> R. You don't want to talk about it but...
> P. But it's there! You have to deal with it.
> R. I guess you would feel a little bit silly just buying a house and then being laid-

off?
P. Yeah!
R. You couldn't predict it or anything.
P. But I still feel like a fool {laughs}.

This fits neatly into Goffman's observation that the common practice of avoidance of interaction by both stigmatized and non-stigmatized will always have much more profound negative consequences for the stigmatized individual, again relating to feedback.

> The very anticipation of such contacts can of course lead normals and the stigmatized to arrange life so as to avoid them. Presumably this will have larger consequences for the stigmatized, since more arranging will usually be necessary on their part. ... Lacking the salutary feed-back of daily social intercourse with others, the self-isolate can become suspicious, depressed, hostile, anxious, and bewildered."
>
> (Goffman 1963:12-13)

The management of stigma is the main theme of books such as Wadel (1973) and Howe (1990). Management of stigma involves much creative choice, along with significant constraints, as Granfield mentions.

> One of the most vibrant research programs that emerged from Goffman's classic work has been in the area of stigma management. A host of conceptual terms have been employed to describe the process by which discreditable individuals control information about themselves as to manage their social identity. Concepts such as passing, deviance disavowal accounts, disclaimers, and covering have often been used in analysing accommodations and adjustments to deviance. These tactics, while offering rewards associated with being seen as normal, frequently contribute to psychological stress. Possessing what Goffman referred to as 'undesired differentness' often has significant consequences for one's personal identity as well as for available life chances.
>
> (Granfield 1991:331-332)

The vast majority of participants in my study (especially the males) chose what Granfield refers to as "covering", which among my research population centrally involved avoidance, and self-imposed social isolation for many. Since I interviewed so many former colleagues from the same workplace, I was surprised to find that many of the male participants used me as a source of information about the situations of former colleagues, who were now isolating themselves even from their closest friends. This extreme isolation was not evidenced among any of the female participants. As a societal category, the unemployed enter a symbolically rich 'world' not only in economic terms, but in terms of their own prior perceptions. Symbolically they are forced by circumstances into a world *conceptually of their own creation,* through their previous empowerment as working people to assign stigmatic and discriminatory characteristics to the category of the unemployed.[3]

Those who are already members of the stigmatized category of the unemployed or downwardly mobile, become the potential 'receivers' of the recently unemployed. It would be expected that the reception would not be a friendly one, since the already downwardly mobile and the chronically poor are quite aware of what the middle and upper-classes think about them in general. One of my participants puts this folk conception bluntly in the following quote, and it is one that the middle-class in particular are well aware of when they become unemployed.

> R. We all know the welfare people have a hell of a time surviving...
> P. Oh, people at the top don't think that - I've got close friends in Calgary, and boy, "I've made my bucks my way, and ah, the hell with somebody else, if they

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[3] In relation to entering a different 'world' based on class distinctions, and associated stigma, Granfield notes that the most common method of trying to cope involves concealment and "camouflage", or in other words, varied forms of 'hiding.' As Granfield says (1991:338-339), "Unlike gender or racial stigma, however, individuals often adjust to class stigma by trying to conceal their uniqueness. The practice of concealing one's class background, for instance, is not unusual. ...individuals who experience downward mobility often attempt to maintain their predecline image by concealing loss of status. Camouflaging unemployment in the world of management by using such terms as "consultant" and by doctoring resumes are ways that downwardly mobile executives "cover their spoiled status." Concealing one's social class circumstances and the stigma that may be associated with it assist s individuals in dealing with any rejection and ostracism that may be forthcoming were the person's actual status known."

> can't do it too bad" - and they still hang onto this whole theory - you know, they talk to one another, on the inside when they're making the good bucks - they have this little -- "you know what I heard the other day, I heard these people on welfare etc etc., you know that really pisses me off - how come we've got to have single women going around on welfare and they're allowed to go get knocked up again - I think we ought to castrate them or whatever they do to ladies." I'm serious, I heard that kind of thing.

At the base of this ironic situation lies the value we place on power, in all its forms, at any level. Empowered people tend to look with derision at people without power, and in the case of the downwardly mobile, these formerly empowered (so able to stigmatize) must join the ranks of the (stigmatized) powerless. In terms of relationships and discourse, this person feels dislocated, and has the impression that they no longer are within the workplace 'world,' which had previously given them substance for conversation, and an audience.

> P. This whole feeling of abandonment, you lost who you are because you're not working. You see people and you say "Oh, what do you do?" That's one of the first questions you ask people. And.. all of a sudden I couldn't... I didn't have any job stories, it was tough, yeah, everyone says "such and such happened in the office.' I couldn't relate to the people that were working, cause I didn't have the same kind of hassles, stresses, or anything, and I felt sort of like my friends who had been working and were now having children, now all they had to talk about was their children, and I didn't even have that. I had nothing. Talk about the latest jigsaw puzzle. Well I think that I fairly strongly know what kind of person I am, and well, who I am I guess, and so as far as I was concerned I was still that same person, but, in relating to other people, I all of a sudden was less of a person than I was before. Just because I all of a sudden didn't have something that I did. Like there was nothing there that was worthwhile. I was still involved in lots of committee work and volunteer things that kept me busy, but it wasn't the same, for me, as having a job to identify "this is what I do and this is who I am."

Having lost her job, she finds that she has nothing to talk about and feels 'less of a person.' She has lost the substance that gives the necessary empowerment for interactive discourse. It is the loss of this kind of power, along with loss of the power to reciprocate in social occasions involving consumption, that contributes to feelings of stigma and helplessness (Spicker 1984:82).[3]

It may be that, with increasing middle-class unemployment in Alberta, the stigma of unemployment may decrease. This person indicates an awareness of this change, although it should be noted that this perception was expressed by a decided minority of my participants. This person explains that changing her perceptions of the unemployed may be due to a sort of 'wearing down' of her previous optimism.

> P. There are jobs out there if you know how to look (sarcastically). I think that my unemployment experience changed my attitudes. When I was first unemployed, I was gung-ho -- I looked for work, I tried every day. I was even looking into starting my own business. The rejection of my business ideas came at the same time as realizing that there was no work for me out there, and that I might have to look for any kind of work. Then I started to understand how easy it is to become despondent, to just sit back and collect our UIC and say "don't bug me' I've already tried." I sort of viewed it in the beginning as an opportunity to find the sort of job that I wanted, but after 5 months it sort of hit me... But yeah, definitely my attitude has changed... I don't look at someone who is unemployed and just think... I can easily see how you can go from being unemployed, losing UIC, ending up on welfare and going into a cycle of no motivation. 'Cause it's very demeaning - 'cause people always ask you "what do you do" and you have no answer.
> R. Did you ever feel that people looked down on you because you were unemployed?
> P. Not my friends or family - people that you meet and say you're unemployed, in this day and age I think everyone just feels sorry for you, and it's not a matter, I don't know that it's a matter of looking down on you, "I have work and you don't" or "I'm working and you're unemployed." I didn't feel that as much, and I think that's because in the last years so many people have lost their jobs, and the situation has been - everyone knows somebody who's in that position, and, so I think that has changed.

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[3] Newman (1985:342) states that "I would argue that widespread support need not be forthcoming for the appropriation [of an historical model of ideological restructuring] to confer a measure of legitimacy in the eyes of outcasts." However, she also qualifies this statement about the stigmatized 'outcasts.' "However, it is certainly true that without wider confirmation of the outcast interpretation of events, closure cannot be achieved." It is hard to imagine any way in which this kind of closure could be possible without an attendant ideological reformulation, since it is socialized ideological premises that attach stigma to certain societal categories.

> R. So you think things have changed because of economic circumstances?
> P. Yeah.

This person shows how early unemployment can be an advantage, since it allows a specialized individual to look for jobs before there is a 'glut' of unemployed professionals in the same area, which he sees as happening due to the provincial cutbacks. This can at least cause one to feel part of a larger category, which is not as isolationist, so somewhat less stigmatic.

> P. Well, it's happening at an interesting time from that point of view too, in that there's so many people being laid-off in this strata right now that it's almost a reverse type of situation. Especially government employees and people like that and it's going to be getting a lot worse - it's almost a benefit to be laid-off early in that process in that you've got a jump on other people for new jobs, and in the atmosphere of privatization I mean you, you're in first even if it wasn't necessarily your choice, you may be the first to get some opportunities.
> R. So you see this as an increasing trend, where there could be a sort of glut of unemployed specialized government workers?
> P. Yeah - there's a lot of people my age, with, say 20 or so reasonable good years of work left in them, that need to find gainful employment - even though you might only work 15-20 more years, you're gonna live 15 years beyond that, so there's, maybe only half-way through your life, there's a long ways to go yet, so you have to find something; and from my point of view, you need to do something worthwhile, at least I feel that way. Ah, I've been quite involved outside of work and different agencies and things like that and that's wrapped-up to a certain extent in my identity too, and my position helped me access some of these agencies. It's (unemployment) happening to people who aren't perceived as lazy - sometimes people with seasonal jobs and stuff like that I mean. There seems to be a stigma attached to not having a job in the wintertime; if what you do can't be done in the wintertime, what the hell else are you supposed to do? But some people don't see it that way - they think well why doesn't he go flip burgers at McDonald's or something - I think there is some snobbery built into that kind of thinking.

Although only about 15% of my participants perceived a lessening of stigmatization of the unemployed, they show that increased unemployment among middle-class individuals may soften the blow of stigmatic self-perceptions for some. This relates to individual contextual perceptions, which have been discussed in more depth in the latter part of chapter seven. One of the most helpful contextual perceptions is that of unemployment as not 'abnormal,' which leads to the individual's self-perception as situationally unfortunate, but also not 'abnormal.'[4]

[2] Marginalization: Creation of the Bounded Unemployed

As the unemployed family in Newman's book found out, by becoming part of this category of the "takers," the working people with whom they could no longer reciprocate stopped contacting them, and they felt isolated. Being isolated from the working people and becoming part of the "needy" means that a person losing his or her job can very quickly find themselves in a marginal position relative to the social values of the larger society. As Gist and Wright define social marginality (1973:27), they make it clear how strictly defined the boundaries between societal categories are, so that social interaction across them becomes limited, at best. Working people as a general rule, spend a lot of time talking socially about work and taxes and the marginal "other" non-working person.

> Social marginality, as the concept is here employed, has reference to inter-group and inter-personal relations that exist between two or more groups. If an individual representing a particular group is not socially acceptable by members of another related group, or if he is acceptable only within specified limits, or in specified

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[4] As Newman (1985:319) says, these kinds of cataclysmic events in society can be part of a dynamic cultural process. ."..there are occasions when the contradictions come to the fore, becoming the explicit object of attention. Cataclysmic events that call for action and response bring cultural tensions into sharper focus. Crisis situations present stark contrasts for the participants, dilemmas that may be less overt in tranquil settings, but that are no less derivative from the mainstream cultural constructs that are the foundation of daily life." On the other hand, when these crisis involve what Athens (1995) describes as a process of "dramatic self change", Newman also notes that "After our prior self has fragmented, however, there is no guarantee hat we will ever develop a new unified one to replace it." (1995:584) Newman's (rather optimistic) scenario of cultural 'growth due to "cataclysmic events" is a derivative of Kuhn's (1962) insightful observation that science progresses through occasional 'revolutions' which change the nature of scientific thought, in a creative process. However, this progression cannot be directly applied to personal crisis in cultural systems. This is largely because, as has been mentioned earlier, societal ideologies, in this case the stigmatic categorization of the category of the unemployed, 'adjust' much too slowly to accommodate individuals affected by rapidly changing socio-economic circumstances.

> ways, he may be said to occupy a socially marginal position and be in a marginal relation to members of that group. The relationships that govern marginality may, therefore, be patterned and formalized, involving a protocol specifying the appropriate mode of interaction in particular situations, or a set of taboos prohibiting designated forms of interaction. The protocol may specify who shall or shall not interact with whom across boundary lines or barriers, under what circumstances, in what form, and for what purpose.
>
> (Gist and Wright 1973:27)

Extreme marginalization of the unemployed by the employed illustrates that lack of socio-economic contextual knowledge, leads to marginalization and discrimination in this context, in much the same way that it does in relation to ethnic boundaries and racism. One person noted that although the cutback process in Alberta may eventually work its way up to the higher-paid strata, the cutbacks began with reductions to people who were at the lower levels of the pay scale. In fact, the very first significant cutback implemented by the Klein administration was to drastically reduce social service (welfare) payments, to an already socio-economically marginalized sector.

> P. I take exception to what our government did on the basis of where they started cutting, because the approach isn't right that you start at the bottom; you just say "well we're going to go to health and cut the budget," because what you've done is you've said to the managers, "cut all those people below you" - I think in the long run it's going to work its way up, OK, that's what's going to have to happen, but it hurts the people that can't afford to be hurt, first...

Unemployed people can feel marginal and character deficient even when the macro-economic picture shows that for the last twenty years, long-term unemployment rates have steadily been rising among the middle-class, and job-loss is often arbitrary and due to macro-economic situations outside of the individuals' control (Abramson, Anderson, Henriksen and Larsen 1988:5-21).

> Most Western societies have been unable (or unwilling) to take any action against one of the major consequences of these societal changes, namely the

> *marginalization* of large groups from the labour market in connection with the persistence of long-term unemployment. Marginalization increases the poverty *risk* in any capitalist society and we lean heavily to the idea that the relationship to the labour market is the single most important factor in regard to risks of poverty.
> (Abramson et al 1988:5)

Stigmatization and marginalization of the unemployed as a category may be due to socialization through common workplace discourse, as noted earlier. However, the media also plays a large part in this, as the following individual makes very clear. It is the mass-mediated stigma attached to social benefits receivers in general, which leads to the marginalization of the unemployed as a category.

> P. I am reluctant to collect U.I.C. because *I think there is a stigma attached to it*, for me anyway. I have collected U.I.C. before and that was before I got this job, so it's been 21 years, and that was only for, less than 2 months and I really needed it at that time, we were just getting our family started, the money really made a difference at that point. It would certainly come in handy right now, but well we don't *need it as badly now* as we would have earlier.
> R. So you would only see that as a last resort?
> P. Yeah.
> R. Where does this stigma attached to collecting UIC come from - is that something that you would find in an office like the one you worked in?
> P. Well, it probably has something to do with that, because we got into a lot of philosophical discussions on things like that. I don't know - it's hard to actually articulate - *you hear so many stories about abuses to the system and stuff like that* and, on the other hand you feel "look I've contributed to this fund for, you know, 21 years and I should not feel any negativity at all towards accessing it." [*emphasis mine*]

[2a] Mass Mediated Creation of a Marginalized Category

Sykes (1988:176-180) points out that ignorance of macroscopic contextual knowledge is a major factor in marginalization, stereotyping, discrimination and racism. This is not a contextual knowledge that many middle-class working people have access to. According to McQuaig (1995) and Taft, (1996) the information that most middle-class people have at their disposal is heavily biased by the socio-economic and political elite, who are in control of producing this information.

McQuaig (1995) makes a convincing argument that the general Canadian middle-class awareness of macroscopic economic forces, is manipulatory information that contributes to the perception that higher social spending is the main problem. She argues that there is a strongly promoted 'new ideology,' which downplays the services that a citizen should expect from the government. This shows that ideological precepts *are* able to change quickly; however, the ability to affect this change rests with an elite minority, and not with the middle-class. McQuaig is not talking about human rights such as those in the Canadian Charter of Rights; by 'rights' here she refers only to government provision of services. In this area, her main point is that Canadian citizens are being socialized towards an ideology of lowered expectations.

> ...[the elite] wants to wean us away from the notion of government as provider and equalizer, and re-establish the discipline of the marketplace in meting out these sorts of rewards where they are "earned." Under the harsher discipline of the marketplace, we would have no automatic "rights" or "entitlements"; all we would have is whatever we could get by selling our services to those with the money to pay us. Presented this way, the new ideology might not sound appealing to most members of society, so it is rarely presented this way. Rather, proponents of rolling back government have focussed on finding fault with the system of extended rights that we've come to enjoy, or presenting ordinary citizens as victims of an excessive tax burden apparently caused by government largesse.
>
> (McQuaig 1995:7)

A part of the "government largesse" that the elite present as the 'villain' has to do with inefficiencies in government programs as well as the size of the bureaucracy in general. However, the 'villain' most emphasized by the media in Canada is *social spending*. McQuaig (1995), provides convincing information in her book that it continues to be attempts to reach zero inflation, rather than social spending, which has such a devastating effect on the Canadian economy. Consistent with the approach in McQuaig's book, this severely underemployed person made observations on the depressing effects of the governments' policy on inflation.

> P. I look at it, and I always said, for all those years when our government said we're going to kill inflation, well I'll tell you, they beat inflation and they killed the economy when they did it. The best times I ever had were when inflation was in effect, because inflation allowed me, as a young person getting started, "I am going to buy that car - you know I can't afford it this year but next year I'm going to get a 10% increase and then I can afford it. I am going to buy a house that I can't afford because I know that my salary is going to go up, and I'm going to be able to afford it." Now what we have is a deflation, you know; one of the scary things is that the politicians in this country have told us that inflation is bad - inflation is bad for certain segments of the population - people who are living off investment, inflation is terrible - people who work for a living, inflation is great. And that's when you had employment, and you had inflation. So they talk about inflation, I get very nervous, because they beat inflation but they killed a lot of people in this country. And all it did was protect the very wealthy in this country. And now we're in a situation where we have deflation, and don't talk to me about deflation, talk about a depression - as soon as you have deflation you have a depression and that's exactly what's happening now.

When analysing the recent situation in the province of Alberta, Taft (1997) shares Mcquaig's (1995) opinion that the mass media is very selective in presenting facts to the public; and that social, or public spending is an inappropriate, yet convenient target of political blame for fiscal problems.

> Spending on public programs in Alberta peaked in the mid-eighties. By the time Don Getty resigned, his government had already reduced spending in Alberta to levels at or below the average for Canadian provinces. Yet since Ralph Klein became premier in December, 1992, the government has worked hard to tell the public a different story, portraying spending on public services in Alberta as 'literally going through the roof.' It has cut funding to public services again, severely. as a result of the Klein cuts, public programs in Alberta, including health care, are now funded at the lowest levels in Canada.
>
> (Taft 1997:2)

This perception can only rigidify the boundary between the employed and unemployed as categories, and heighten the stigmatization of receivers of public spending of all kinds, whether through social assistance, or public service wages. Public or social spending is a simplistic political justification for all sorts of cutbacks. Taft shows this in the case of Alberta under the Klein administration, and gives a perspective of political media distortion in general. The success of this political manoeuvring is clearly shown in the first and subsequent re-election of the Klein administration on the same platform of 'fiscal responsibility.' As Taft says, the general public always seem to prefer the 'simple' answer, rather than the complexities of the actual problems.

> In the right circumstances, it is surprisingly easy to mislead a lot of people. People love simple answers to difficult political problems, and are often more convinced by the simple answer than the correct one. The Klein government has offered the public a simple answer to the problem of public debt and deficits. ...
> (Taft 1997:70)

All of my participants tended to agree that the media misleads the public by portraying the benefits recipients as the people responsible for economic problems, and at the same time giving the impression that for the majority of working people, the economy is improving. One individual echoed the comments I heard repeatedly about contextual misrepresentation in the media.

Note: Although much research supports this general perception of media misrepresentation given by my participants, certainly some research would argue the opposite. My presentation here is not of concrete, objectively 'proven facts'; rather I am attempting to support the *general position* taken by my participants.)

> P. No, the media aren't reflecting what's going on in the real world; the media have a very very special voice - the media have the voice of the advertiser and the politician and their own voice that hasn't been touched.

One unemployed person, whose spouse owns a small business, gives an example of how the media presentations make it seem as if the middle-class are doing quite well; while she sees the same socio-economic deterioration among the middle class that was expressed by most of my participants.

> R. They say that the Alberta economy is booming these days...
> P. I know, I don't understand that.
> R. It's coming out really strongly in the media now how well Klein did and how well things are going.
> P. That things are recovering they figure (sarcastic). They're not, they're not, if they would get out and interview like what you're doing, well, maybe people could see that it's not.
> R. The general impression from everyone I talk to is that things aren't the way they look in the media.
> P. No. And I feel like, we used to have what, it was growing in Darkwater - you had your higher class, middle class and then the lower class - there's always been a lower class. But now you have - I have a brother, and no kidding he must make 200 grand a year and then there's me surviving, and there's hardly a middle class anymore; it's like either you do very well or you, just exist and kind of eke out a living, you manage to pay your bills, but you just have nothing left - you can't save it, a penny or anything you have, well if something goes wrong in the house what do you do eh? It's pretty tough. Anyhow, I feel like , it's just like either you're doing great, or you're sort of... not doing very well, but there's not much of a ... not really an in-between.

Of course, under economic pressure and stress, people tend to concentrate on their own immediate situations and problems, rather than examining in-depth macroscopic economic causes. However, as McQuaig and Taft point out, the sources of information in Canada that are available to the general public about macroscopic causation, are remarkably consistent in concentrating on the impending catastrophic effects of the deficit. At the same time, it tends to give the impression that this deficit is largely caused by too much social spending, or in other words, a large part of the population being supported by the working people.[5] This reinforces the societal division between the taxpayers and receivers of benefits. This distorted context can only increase the levels of stigmatization and marginalization experienced by those who become unemployed.

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[5]

[3] An Emphasis on Specific *Contextual Knowledge Among my Participants*

When examining the contextual knowledge which my participants found most relevant with regard to their situations, it became apparent that very little of it had to do with macro-economic forces affecting the middle-class in general. Rather than general macroscopic effects to the middle-class, most individuals cared more about the specific situation in Alberta, and even more frequently, the situations in their own specific fields. Macro-economic and political contextual awareness was highly individualistic and particularistic, with certain specific emphasis. This person commented on the heavy tax burden carried by the middle-class, but he resented it in relation to corporate profits and tax breaks, rather than to social spending.

> P. And in the taxation system too - there's no equality - middle-class people carry it, and what they have to do is get down to an equitable tax system which is a flat rate - the same % for every dollar earned. The Royal Bank will make a billion dollars this year, that's what they're projecting - how much tax do you think they'll pay?

Goldfarb (1991:13-14) is much more blunt about the distorted media presentations, and writes an interesting monograph about their role in creating what he calls the "cynical society." He further notes that it is particularly among the middle class that there is a socioeconomic as well as a cultural deterioration and cynicism reinforced by a distorted media presentation. He states: " Cynicism, in a certain sense, is an understandable and rational response to our present-day circumstances. Television, our major form of society-wide communication, is saturated with lies and manipulations. Our political leaders are more concerned with reelection that political accomplishment. ...For many, proclamations of the American Dream accomplished simply to cover up a wide range of American nightmares. ...Viewing life at the top and the bottom, those in the middle are prone to dismay. They observe a social surrealism of wealth not earned and poverty that threatens. ...and they know that many among themselves...have lost everything. The old work ethic, Max Weber's "Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism" seems to be out of order, if not in complete disrepair."

This individual emphasized the contextual effects to his particular field, and resentment is directed to the absence of planning by the provincial government in implementation of the cutbacks.

> P. It strikes me as evidence of how little forethought was put into all [the provincial administration's] budget-cutting and their layoffs, when they say they want to privatize the services. But they can't unload the people, without paying them severance packages, and the body of expertise to carry on the services in the private sector is primarily the same people who are being laid off. And so it's sort of a catch-22, in that, where do they think they're going to go but to the very people that you've paid-out to get rid of them? And the thing that I get angry about is, while I'm not here, internally within the organization, I do get annoyed with municipal affairs when the board says "we've got no use for planning anymore." But it has, to my knowledge, never done anything to evaluate, either whether it's the most equitable or the most economical or the most accessible way to provide services to the municipalities; that evaluation has never been undertaken. So that says to me well, how do you know whether privatization is the most economical, since the studies have never been done.[6]

Burman's (1988) mainly qualitative findings showed that people who could cope well with, or as he puts it "transcend" unemployment, rated highly on four central variables, two of which directly had to do with contextual awareness. Along with the individuals' financial situation upon becoming unemployed, and their level of available social support, the other two most significant factors were their educational levels, (implying a high macro-contextual awareness) and the subscription to what he calls a "collectivist ideology" (1988:205-207).

> Though education did not conclusively deter the negative impacts of unemployment, it did provide the analytical tools to *generalize* about the condition. Those without these tools felt personally distressed and powerless...
> (Burman 1988:206, [*emphasis mine*])

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[6] This is particularly relevant in light of more recent developments, as the provincial government has, in fact, had to rehire the same individuals who were previously laid off with large severance packages. Usually when these people are rehired, it is on a contract basis without benefits, or at a much lower salary.

The following unemployed professionals, who had a good grasp of the context in general, stressed the effects of the cutbacks in Alberta to their specific field, along with the personal situation of their own dismissals. In this case, since the occupational field had been almost eliminated through choices made at the provincial level, contextual knowledge did not provide much alleviation of distress. The provincial government had, in effect, asserted the redundancy of an entire occupational area, which these people took very personally. These two professionals, both with over twenty years experience as lad-use planners, narrate contextual perspectives that are representative of those of most of my participants.

> P. There's also the fact that uh, you know, you question why you were the one who got laid off. There's a lot that goes into that kind of thinking and stuff like that.
> R. Politics?
> P. Yeah, a lot of it boils down to that, and timing and all sorts of things, what other options were looked at. I gave a little address to everybody, sort of summarizing my feelings and stuff like that, and basically I said "look, the situation is that, you know I don't feel bad about my job myself, because it wasn't because I wasn't doing my job that I got laid off, we were working in a political arena where we had no control over the budget situation."
> R. Budgets were really slashed in the planning commission...
> P. 100% from provincial coffers.
> R. So all you had left was what you were getting from municipal funds?
> P. That's right, that, that formula actually kicks in March 1 (1995) that's the last of the provincial money; it will be used up by then, so everything has to be municipal, or fee-for-service, so....
> R. So what they're really doing is sort of privatizing [the regional planning system] - they're making it into a kind of consulting agency?
> P. That's right, and the thing is there's not enough money from a lot of the municipalities so that, there wasn't enough to maintain it at the previous level, because they would have to make up 60% of the funding, there was just too much of a gap to raise it very far, so you've got some municipalities that are only paying $400/year for our services and they had access to the same kind of services that municipalities that were paying, you know, $35,000.
> R. So this is really going to hurt the municipalities too.
> P. Yeah.

> P. Well I'm quite disgusted by [the Klein administration] because the amount of money that it would have taken to run the whole provincial planning commissions was only 5 million/year, for ten regional planning commissions - the only reason that it was done is that the minister, Steve West, does not like planning, planners, or anything to do with land-use regulations. He made it a personal vendetta to basically get rid of planning commissions and so on - he just thought it was unnecessary red tape. I see it evolving to a stage where, like so many American states, where you have, it's just chaotic, there's no continuity from one municipality to another, and you end up with all sorts of land-use problems, so on each other's doorsteps, which otherwise could have been avoided, so I'd like someone to sort of arbitrate and be sort of independent and provide unbiased advice. The analogy that I use is they've come in with machetes on these budget things where they could have used scalpels - more effective, and a lot fewer people would have lost their jobs, and that kind of thing, so it was to, just a hack and slash, just to look good - supposedly they're 300 million ahead of their target for this point in their plan, which makes me think they didn't have much of a plan in the fist place, just a free-for-all in dumping programs and budgets and people. You have these bozos who want to take the colour T.V.s away from the inmates and give them black and whites, then they find out that black and white T.V.s cost more than colour T.V.s {laughs}. Anyhow, it's mean, you know, there's a meanness to it and, that's galling too.

The ability to generalize about the situation, as mentioned by Burman, was found in my study to be only loosely related to the level of education. However, it must be noted here that while Burman (1988) interviewed a large group of people, with a great range in educational levels, my study population was quite small, as well as educationally 'homogenous' in comparison. This 'equalization of contextual awareness' came in a large part from discourse among all members in the office; this 'contextual awareness equalization' is another reason that I chose to include all office staff in the same collective habitus.

More significant with my participants was the factor of individual interpretation, in particular what Burman (1988:207) calls a "collectivist ideology." Very similar to being able to generalize, what he seems to be referring to is the ability of the affected individual to be able to see their situation as a result of larger macroscopic forces. These people, as Burman puts it, were "intellectually fortified against the misplaced egoism of self-blame" (1988:207). Cohn (1978), in a more highly quantitative study, found very similar results. As he put it:

> The availability of an external source to which job loss may be attributed reduces the likelihood that unemployment will cause a decline in self-satisfaction.
> (Cohn 1978:91)

The majority of my participants, while unemployed, did not seem to support this general hypothesis, since they experienced high levels of trauma from the perceived 'singling out' of their occupational area, and the breaking up of their workplace 'family.' At the same time, each one of them knew that this was the result of larger contextual forces that they had absolutely no control over.

However, a person who had become *re-employed* in a very similar position, looking back upon his 3 months of unemployment, is able to distance himself from it and supports the above hypothesis very well. He asserts that he was viewing unemployment rather impersonally, but at the same time indicates what I perceived in the first interview with him. He was quite traumatized and depressed at that time, and as he says, the *specific* circumstances of his dismissal were "gnawing away at him."

> P. In terms of being back to work, that feels quite good. You get into some interesting situations when you have all that time on your hands. You know, what I perceived might happen and what actually happened , in that three month period of time, were two different things. I thought I might have a little bit of money at my disposal to kind of enjoy myself a little bit more. As it was, I just got worked up about the severance deal [lawsuit]. That kind of gnawed away at me even more. But I really looked forward to getting back to work, I would have liked to started a lot sooner, but my self esteem started to go back up. You know I was never really down on myself, because the way I looked at it, I didn't do anything wrong. It was just one of those things where you are caught up in a movement, almost,

> where you can't control things and so many people were affected. I consider myself quite lucky because I ended up in as good if not a better job.

Only one unemployed individual seemed to support the hypothesis both that higher education and a "collectivist ideology" could serve to ameliorate the trauma of unemployment. However, a significant contributory factor in her being able to 'distance herself,' was the fact that she had seen the futility of self-blame; again in a very personal, specific context.

> P. So, I think, immediately it was at least a kind of resolution of things and a sense that you now knew where you stood and could sort of get on with things. I think the thing that has helped me the most, during sort of the aftermath of that, is that there were really only three professionals left in the workplace, so I thought "they're down to bare bones, and if they could have kept any of us, they would have." So that said to me "this is no reflection on my job performance - that has nothing to do with it whatever." And I had stayed quite close to a person who had been let go about 1 1/2 years ago, and I watched him go through 9 months or a year of beating himself up with all the doubts and what-ifs, and "if only I'd done something different" and if only this hadn't happened or that hadn't happened, and I was really grateful that I hadn't had to go through that, and I can go to interviews and I don't feel that, having to hide anything, or having to apologize for anything, or wishing anything had been done differently. I get angry at the *government*, because I see it as a purely political point, that has nothing to do with the people here, they just aren't giving them the money.

From part-time secretaries to executives, all of the people in this workplace had a similar awareness of larger societal context. Much of the recent workplace discourse had revolved around how the cutbacks were or could affect their workplace. However, on a personal level, they had very different interpretations. A person in an executive position, with a good knowledge of managerial skills, acknowledged the difficulties inherent in the sudden provincial cutbacks, which no managers had time to prepare for. Knowing this she still emphasized the main problems as results of poor management of the cutbacks in her *specific workplace*, as well as acknowledging the need to cut.

R. Managers usually lost well 30 or 40% instantly, of their whole budgets - which is quite a shock to these people?
P. Yeah.
R. And then they have to do such rapid restructuring, and I wonder how much planning goes into this, so that maybe there would be some logic to it. I just wonder if, really just because of lack of practice, inexperience with dealing with such things, whether that might have something to do with the sort of haphazard ways that things were done.
P. Maybe. I agree they haven't done well and it's not just my situation but out of the provincial cuts I watch and I really have trouble believing that there's been careful thought, before the cuts - they announce the cut - 20% or 30% and then they figure out how they're going to get there, and what they might have left - instead of deciding what it is, what services they need, and figuring out what it really costs to do that service efficiently. I don't think they're approaching it the right way, and I don't know whether it's lack of experience, whether there are a lot of poor managers around, who've just been promoted through the ranks, 'cause that's what you do you just keep promoting people. And it's easy for them to manage and look good when things are good, and now things aren't good.
R. A lot of people have mentioned that for a long time, government jobs, especially at the upper level, were very comfortable places to be and...
P. I agree with you that there was room to cut, in most organizations, I don't question that, I question how the decision were made up on what should be cut.

What was contextually central to many of my participants, was the specific face-to-face workplace situations and decisions which led to their being laid off. The main factor in how traumatic the layoffs were, as expressed to me, had much more to do with the length of the person's employment in the specific workplace. More years of service in the same workplace seems to be directly linked to the amount of trauma and self-blame and blaming of others in the workplace. Many years of service was perceived by the workers as giving them a sense of seniority, which should be recognized in relation to the order in which persons were laid off.[7] There was also much concern about specific details of the actual

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[7] I was very surprised when I asked the longer-term workers how long they had been at the particular workplace. I expected answers to be given in years, but the people who had been there approximately two decades or more gave me answers in years, months, and even days.

'event' of being laid off. This workplace 'family had collectively recognized a whole variety of 'family' events; birthdays, retirements, resignations, promotions, and so forth. They had little recent experience with layoffs. The following person shows how someone with a lot of seniority thought that his layoff should be treated as an early retirement. The processes by which layoffs are decided, implemented and 'performed' is very important to the unemployed. Individuals may think about and go over these details for months after becoming unemployed, and this leads to introversion, isolation, and sometimes symptoms of clinical depression. This person had full macroscopic contextual awareness of the causal economic forces, and knew that their director had no options when provincial budget cuts to this field/workplace were 100%, but it was the *situational specifics* of the termination itself which were emphasized.

> P. I ran into a problem with my first lawyer, the papers which the commission sent to me weren't given to me in time, and had they been given to me in time I would have signed them and I wouldn't be in this thing, so my first lawyer kind of screwed up, which kind of put me in this bind in the first place, and so I went to a heavy-hitter lawyer, someone who specializes in wrongful dismissals and basically I'm suing them from a hardball position, I tried to approach my former employers and say, "look, we made a deal, I'm willing to abide by that original deals, let's shake hands and go, " but they didn't want to do it so now, uh,...
> R. So there are a lot of hard feelings between you and your original employers?
> P. Yeah (sadly).
> R. A lot of emotional things going on...
> P. Oh I feel like I was betrayed, because I meant them no harm and I didn't - they are basically accusing me of dealing in bad faith, which impugns my integrity and my reputation and things like that, I, after working for them for that long, you know, there seemed to be no trust on their side of the equation, which really was disturbing, still is I mean, still bothers me.
> R. Well it would bother anyone after 21 years.
> P. Yeah, even when I got laid off, none of them even said that they were sorry, well there's one exception, but after that length of time they never even had the guts to come and say, we're sorry we had to make this decision, they wouldn't even make eye contact. So it was uncalled for, had something else happened, like they gave me the opportunity to retire, instead of laying me off, it would have been a

> completely different ball game, they would have had a party (laughs bitterly) and the whole shooting match. 'Cause that's what they do. But between being laid-off and retiring, you know, even though it would have been an early retirement situation, the whole ball game would have been different. But basically they just dumped me and treated me like dirt, you know after that length of time in the job. That's the hardest part really to deal with right now, *I mean I can understand the economics of the situation, even though I think [the government] could have done things differently, I can still live with that*, because you know, I have alternatives, but there's no need to have treated me the way that they treated me.

Higher levels of contextual awareness do have the general effect of helping people prepare psychologically for the layoffs, since contextual knowledge can contribute to a better knowledge of impending change, and earlier preparation. However, as the person shows in the above quote, and others indicated as well, the highly 'depersonalized' nature of their dismissals was very demeaning to them. I described the professional workplace as a ritual occasion in chapter five, in which several participants mentioned the high level of collective participation in informal transitions such as promotions, birthdays and so forth. Since the provincial cutbacks and layoffs came so quickly, and were so devastating to the workplace 'family,' these people did not know how to respond in some similarly supportive ritual fashion. As Newman says, in western society, we have rituals for many kinds of 'progressive' transitions, but none for such things as downward mobility or layoffs.

> American culture is rich in rituals and symbols that celebrate worldly success. ...Our symbolic vocabulary for failure is, by comparison, stunted. Downward mobility has virtually no ritual face. It is not captured in myths or ceremonies that might help individuals in its grip to make the transition from a higher to a lower social status... This impoverishes public discourse about the problem. Even more important, it has a savage impact on the downwardly mobile themselves. Lacking social and cultural support, the downwardly mobile are caught in a transitional state, a psychological no-man's-land. ... The absence of socially-validated pathways for dealing with economic decline has important consequences for the downwardly mobile. They often mourn in isolation and fail to reach any sense of closure in their

> quest for a new identity.
>
> (Newman 1989:9,11)

As Kertzer explains, the power of symbolism, as expressed through ritual, serves many utilitarian purposes, even if these are not recognized, or 'taken for granted.' Symbolic rituals have an important place in making sense out of personal changes and transitions in industrial society, and would greatly moderate the trauma of individualistic, highly personalized situations of layoffs, by giving these situations a recognized, objectified cultural recognition, as Newman noted.

> This [societal] order is largely provided by the symbol system we learn as members of our culture, a system that allows for both social creativity and individual idiosyncrasy. Such symbol systems provide a "shield against terror." They are a means, indeed the primary means, by which we give meaning to the world around us; they allow us to interpret what we see, and, indeed, what we are. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this symbolic process is its taken-for-granted quality. ... Through symbols we confront the experiential chaos that envelops us and create order. By objectifying our symbolic categories, rather than recognizing them as products of human creation, we see them as somehow [natural].
>
> (Kertzer 1988:4)

The objectification of symbolic systems through ritual does not occur during times of layoffs, when neither the symbols or the rituals are available or well-developed in western society. This causes the introversion which Newman (1989:11) speaks of, and is especially felt as dislocation since the professional workplace had been seen as a rich symbolic world, imbued with symbolically objectifying ritual processes, that were in many cases 'taken for granted' (see chapter five).

The following person survived the layoffs, but since he was in a senior position in the workplace, he both knew more about the dire fiscal situation, as well as knowing that he could be one of the unemployed soon, due to the larger salary that went with his position.

Preparation in this case meant that his wife had to take on a full-time job, as well as his looking into many alternatives well ahead of time. It is false to assume that the more 'well-prepared' individuals suffer less trauma, as this person shows.

> P. Actually, because of the job situation, and knowing that the layoffs were coming, we sat down and said "look, we have to deal with this." You know I am a one of the high-priced guys, and I thought I'd be secure, but I might get laid off and the whole [institution] may die. So that's when my wife had to go to work full-time. It is a good insurance policy. What we were assuming at that time was perhaps that I had to look at other things. But all I'd read about starting a business was not that optimistic. The type of security we had before, it was a direct decision at that time, that she was going to run a business. But 16 years later, times have changed.

The following highly contextually-aware executive mentions that in her opinion, there is nothing wrong with the provincial goal of deficit-reduction, as long as it also involves knowledgeable consideration of the future.

> P. I can agree with what Klein is doing, 100%, on the deficit side. If he gets rid of that deficit, and makes our province a financially healthy community, "go for it, do it." But along the line, don't compromise 15 years down the road, don't make such a mess of the community that; alright you might be financially stable, but all you're going to attract is the kind of quick in and out development that could result in our being pauperized in 15 years.

Contextual knowledge, even when manipulated in mass media presentation, is still interpreted and discussed in the professional workplace, and generally high levels of awareness are evidenced. However, this awareness, combined with the emphasis on personalized workplaces, lifestyles and positions, does not *necessarily* reduce stress. If many individuals in the same occupational area become unemployed at the same time, this may even increase stress when it is seen as increased competition for positions, rather than in terms of the situation 'not being my fault.'

[4] Chapter Summary

In general, it appears that many middle-class individuals are feeling increasingly marginalized and discouraged about socio-economic and lifestyle expectations. In this chapter, I have outlined some of the effects of stigma and marginalization to the unemployed individual, and to the category of the unemployed. The media definitely have a strong role in reinforcing a dichotomous and antithetical conceptualization of categories of the employed and unemployed. It is also clear that a high level of contextual knowledge, when *individually interpreted* as clearly showing that the unemployment is a result of macroscopic forces beyond the individual's control, will ameliorate stress to some degree. Unfortunately, among my study group, this did not occur very often. It was the more personal, microscopic situational factors which were emphasized, since these are highly identified with the self, as shown in chapters four and five.

Although in the period following my interviews, socioeconomic conditions appear to be improving in Alberta, at least to some extent, the ability to 'step aside,' 'look ahead' and objectify the situation in any macroscopic sense was very hard for my participants, and introversion at the more personal, microscopic level, was far more common. I have also introduced the idea that the middle-class may be itself becoming an increasingly marginalized cultural category, with distinct individual consequences, and this will be further explored in chapter nine below. The concept of a 'new ideology' of less expectations that I introduce directly reflects the perceptions of most of my participants, and is intended to frame their understandings in a broader perspective. In no way does this concept of a developing 'new ideology,' as understood by my participants, mean more than such things as lowered expectations of lifestyle standards, educational opportunities, and government service provisions. One person expressed this as the government encouraging its citizens to be more self-reliant, and this is exactly what is meant by this 'new ideology.' We could accurately refer to it as the ideology of increased personal self-reliance; at the same time, we could then surely express it (as my participants seemed to) as an ideology of being able to expect less from the government. In both cases, the 'new ideology' involves a sort of paternalistic conception of government, now encouraging its 'children' to become more self-reliant, while the 'children' are of the general opinion that if what they are paying in return for service provision is not decreasing, then neither should the actual services.

CHAPTER NINE:

A MARGINALISED AND DISCOURAGED MIDDLE-CLASS: THE 'NEW IDEOLOGY' OF LOWERED EXPECTATIONS

In this chapter, I build and further elaborate upon the material presented in chapter eight. This chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section I discuss the increasing marginalization of the middle-class, focussing on a few main aspects. I outline what may be referred to as the 'new societal ideology,' which encourages people to think of themselves as being able to expect less service provision from the government, while middle-class socio-economic needs are increasing. This, again, is an attempt on my part to portray the general perceptions of my participants. In a macroscopic socioeconimic context, arguments can and are being made that standards of living are both increasing and/or decreasing in quality. However, the bulk of the literature on the effects of government fiscal restraints and cutbacks to the middle-class supports the argument that many services are being decreased, and the 'pay-for services' model is increasing in scope.

Unemployment statistics can be rather deceptive, since they do not include those who have 'given up,' or used up their unemployment benefits without finding work, and, most importantly, they do not reflect the vastly increasing numbers of persons in Western society listed statistically as 'employed,' who are working in very low-paying service sector jobs (see Strobel 1993), often for the minimum wage which, in Alberta, is the lowest in Canada. For a comprehensive account of general macroscopic effects to the middle-classes, such books as Strobel (1993) should be consulted, as well as the numerous other books dealing with macroeconomics which are described in footnotes in the introduction above. Again, in this section I am providing the perceptions of my participants, and attempting to support them with relevant literature. I also examine the increasing marginalization of the middle-class as a transition, including a transition towards increasing isolation of nuclear family households, and an apparent lessening of a sense of neighbourhood community.

In the second section, I look at evidence of lowered expectations of middle-class professional people, relating to occupational and lifestyle success and achievement. This contributes to a general atmosphere of discouragement among middle-class individuals, both working and unemployed. It also suggests that the lifestyle expectations of the middle-class are becoming significantly closer to those usually associated with the lower classes, (such as dual-income households just 'making ends meet') which could have the effect of either solidifying the boundaries between these classes even more, or making them less rigidly conceptualized. In this section I also discuss feelings of depersonalization among many of my participants, as an extreme form of marginalization.

In the third section I outline a striking example of how general middle-class discouragement can be manifested in a devaluation of higher education, representing a significant change in social values, especially among this stratum of society.

[1] The Increasing Socioeconomic Marginalization of the Middle-Class

[1a] The 'New Ideology': Less Service Provision, More Needs

McQuaig argues that a 'new ideology' now predominates in Canada, directed at lowering middle-class expectations of what services the government should provide, in return for their high rate of taxation.

> ... a pitch that is coming from virtually all established information sources in our lives: from business, government, academia and the media - those who can loosely be termed "the elite." Dissenting voices are sometimes heard in all these sectors. Nevertheless, a prevailing ideology has taken hold in our culture with a ferocity that has eliminated any meaningful debate. The newly dominant ideology has many threads, but essentially it is about lowering our expectations of what a society can do for its citizens.
>
> (McQuaig 1995:5)

That this "new ideology" should prevail is rather ironic, given the assumed political power of the middle-class. The middle-class is itself becoming "welfarized" and economically marginal, without much accurate contextual information. This makes this process of marginalization highly ambiguous.[1] Becoming unemployed puts a great deal of added pressures on middle-class families, who were already, for the most part, living with significant debt loads, and not a large amount of savings. As this person notes, changes to a consumerist lifestyle based around a now unpredictable income are not easily made, especially when they must be made abruptly and without any anticipatory preparation.

> P. It's mostly the mortgage and a loan as well, and it's a sizeable mortgage, with sizeable monthly payments, and then other bills that add up, I mean everybody uses their plastic, so the payments get bigger, and bills and what not too.
> R. So because of the payments, the loan, the Visa that kind of thing, when they laid you off, then those kinds of things would be what put the financial strain?
> P. Well, I didn't have a whole lot of time to get ready, 'cause I only had 2 weeks notice, and so, you know, although I sensed that there might be a layoff in the future, it came faster than I expected - I wasn't quite ready for it yet. We have some leverage, well not leverage, but a good credit history at the bank so we managed to work things out with the banker and so, so we've got some breathing space between now and when I start [a job lined-up], I mean, we'll have to

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[1] Goldfarb (1991:13) notes that decreased expectations in the form of a general cynicism, is not class-specific, but a western cultural phenomenon. As he says: "Cynicism is shared by the haves and the have nots; in the language of the 80s, by the yuppies and the underclass. ...New, innovative rules of the financial game are disengaged from the game's point. ...The breakdowns in family and community life, the failures of public education, and the deindustrialization of the American economy make it so that the low men and women on the economic totem pole have fallen off the pole. Hence the proper word describing their situation is underclass, not lower class or working class."

> obviously cut back and stuff like that - Christmas is going to be a little tougher
> R. It is a bit of a lifestyle change I expect.
> P. Yeah -we were living quite well, we still are, its just that you know um, it takes a while I guess to figure out what you really need and what you don't need.

While real incomes among the middle-class decline, or fail to increase, and employment becomes increasingly tenuous[2], individuals are very aware that they are being heavily taxed, as this person points out.

> P. Well that's what's killed our economy - I don't have money, I can't spend it. The government gets it before I even see it - they know they won't get it if I had a choice, so they take it off my payroll, so that whole scene in this country where no one has any money to spend on things they want to spend it on - the government is doing it.

Many middle class people are becoming cynical and introverted, and operating in a "micro-social sphere," as Strobel describes it, in order to concentrate on their own problems and increased socio-economic pressures.

> As the erosion began, wives began to work part-time and then full-time....The American middle class is the hardest working in the world. It works the longest hours, with the shortest vacations, and is provided less in the way of government services than any of the major industrial giants... But the enormous demands placed on the middle class leave them little time nor energy to figure out why the economic system is failing them. *So more political activity is concentrated into simple, single-issue politics such as prayer in the schools, abortion or freedom of choice, or flag-burning. The real financial and economic issues are just too complicated.*
>
> (Strobel 1993:xii [*emphasis mine*])

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[2] Increasingly tenuous workplace positions are also definitely contributing to pressures in this setting as well, and having serious consequences which would also affect the household sphere. An article in the Globe and Mail (July 23 1996:B4) states that "Group insurers in this study reported that between 1992 and 1994, their total disability claims increased 1.6 percent. But mental and nervous claims took a dramatic increase, rising 31 percent. A contributing factor is that employees are being asked to perform at a higher level in today's competitive environment... People with psychological disabilities are more susceptible to the resultant stress..."

When even the employed middle-class people are so occupied dealing with their own socio-economic pressures, they are not likely to be very sympathetic to those of the unemployed. This may increase the *conceptual* 'gap' between the middle and lower classes, even as the *economic* 'gap' may be decreasing. On the other hand, it could also have the potential to change attitudes of the middle towards the lower classes in a positive way. However, even if the middle-class does become more sympathetic to the financial strains of social benefits receivers, for example, there is little that they could do to objectify this concern. They simply cannot afford any additional financial burdens. The middle-class in general may not have become the sort of 'culture of cynicism' that Goldfarb (1991:13) describes. However, they are definitely seeing the erosion of their own socioeconomic situations and societal influence, and becoming increasingly marginalized and discouraged.[3]

[1b] The Transition Towards A Marginalized Middle-Class

While perceptions in the media generally give the impression that the economy is improving, more middle-class people feel that they are making the 'transition' in the general direction of a marginalized societal category. For most of my participants, it was hard for them to 'step back' and believe that the economy was improving, due to their and others' situations. (It should be noted that at the time of my interviewing, the Alberta economic 'atmosphere' was a rather hard-line one of 'sacrifice now, for future gains.' At this time, everyone was well aware of the sacrifices affecting them directly, and could not envision future macroscopic economic benefits easily.) More recently, the Alberta economy does seem to show signs of improvement, but at the provincial level, this has a lot to do with the relatively high prices of crude oil, as Klein himself has acknowledged, and oil production is not an industry which employs very many people.

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[3] Hage and Powers (1992:22-23) give an example of the conception of the deteriorating state of the middle-class family in America. This perception remains salient whether it is an 'objective observation,' media presentation, or just a general folk conception. In any case, it is representative of the kinds of perceptions that middle-class people in western society have of their situations. As they put it: "The most dramatic pieces of evidence for a shift in the nature of society are the widespread examples of institutional decay. The media is constantly highlighting ubiquitous signs of failure, most notably in the family. Teenage suicide has tripled in the past three decades. Teenage pregnancy kept rising up to the 80s; although it now appears to be levelling off. The divorce rate has hit 50% in some states, although this rate appears to be levelling off. To this, one can add rape, child abuse, latch-key children, delinquency, drugs and alcohol abuse, and a host of other implications that the contemporary American family is not functioning effectively." It is also the middle-class institution of the family that is being targeted as a source of blame of societal problems; through mass-mediated presentation of such a host of social pathologies implying the 'dysfunctional' nature of so many families. ***This can only contribute further to increasing household and individual introversion, societal segmentation, and lack of experiencing community.***

At the personal level, recent improvements in availability of services may be largely due to provincial decisions to reinvest money in particularly hard-hit areas during the cutbacks. The Alberta economy is most definitely improving now in one important area; that of corporate investment in the province. While this certainly creates new jobs, it also now proceeds with a severely reduced system of checks and balances that was provided by the land-use planners and the provincial Planning Act. Thus, during the period of my interviewing, there were increasingly important systemic connections developing between the formerly distinct categories of the marginalized and the 'mainstream.' The middle class, according to Strobel (1993), are in fact marginalized in relation to the labour market as are the poor or unemployed.

This unemployed person whose spouse owns a small business, shows that because of the uncertain and sporadic income from the business, she cannot afford to risk using her skills in her spouse's business. Increased pressures on small businesses and on middle-class consumers, leave her no choice but to seek (very hard to find) work elsewhere.

> P. I would have rather worked with him, as far as being, using my secretarial skills, look what I'm doing now, I'd have had an office computer and help him run his business you now. And I would just as soon do that, if it would pay, if all the money that we get in would increase because of it, I don't know if it will, we need to see how he'll do this [hunting] season. The thing of it is with the economy the way it is, everybody's cutting back so if you get something [game animal] and you don't have the money, [to have it mounted/stuffed] well you don't, you first pay your bills; if you get your life in proper perspective, you're trying to pay off the things that are more important and get ahead and to do whatever is down the line, and we can tell that a lot of people have ...
> R. There are probably fewer people now that can even afford to go hunting.
> P. Oh, for sure! Oh yeah, there's less, there is definitely that.

Another middle-class professional woman had occupied an executive position, while her husband ran a fairly large business. Increasing pressures on the business community meant that it made more sense to rely on her income, so that her husband could take a smaller salary from the business as a form of reinvesting in it. As she says, even larger businesses can be unpredictable due to cutbacks in spending.

> P. My husband runs a business, and takes a very small salary from the business, so my salary has always been higher than his. And... with that job it was... significantly higher than what he would normally take out of the business, and it was certainly... what we lived on. For most expenses, there are some things that are sort of his, but we could live very comfortably on my salary, so that was just the way we did it.
> R. And I guess in a business sense, in taking less of a salary, he was basically reinvesting in his business?
> P. And... the business is always unpredictable, and some years they don't make money, so his low salary is... what he gets. There are other years where they're able to take some money out of the company, but that has not been the case for... some years.

[1c] The Modern Middle-Class Community: Isolated Nuclear Families

The increasingly marginalized middle-class communities may be going through a transition themselves. There appears to be a movement towards more isolated nuclear family households, turning inwards to try to address their increasing pressures; and avoiding possible stigmatic feedback by lessening neighbourhood interaction. This person, has lived in the same middle-class community for 17 years, and knows many people who have been affected negatively by cutbacks in recent years. The commonality of middle class layoffs has not contributed to any sense of neighbourhood community. In his opinion, it has resulted in 'downsized communications' among people living close together, as they deal with ever-harsher realities.

> R. Because some of these 40-60 people have taken great losses in employment, does that mean that, you don't feel so bad about your own situation?
> P. Oh no, no, that doesn't change your situation at all, but you have to become a realist at that point in time, that's why I say that from my point of view I do know that I have to get into a business, OK? It brings up a, well a whole bunch of reality has to set in - it puts a lot of pressure on your home life, because you went from $50,000/year myself, my wife was making, at that time, $25,000, she's taken a 30% cut - we're looking at living on her salary and what I can pick up - so your whole lifestyle changes - that doesn't mean you like that, but you have to sort of adjust to that and accept it - we all try to hold onto as much as we can - what I'm saying is you got used to that lifestyle, therefore you don't want to change it and you only change it when you have to - when the old finance company comes and says your car's gone - then you might look at selling it. I can see the change in the attitudes because they've got much *more private as this has happened.*

At the community level, the effects of increased marginalization are intensifying as the middle-class feels more economic and societal pressures. This severely underemployed individual provides an acute folk analysis of the relations between government, industry and unemployment. It is apparent that middle-class individuals are aware of being increasingly marginalized. This involves an increased lack of a sense of community, and perhaps most importantly, disempowerment exhibited by an inability to affect changes, and a general lowering of standards and expectations.

> P. I work at the mall about 10 hrs/week, but it's slow over there, from my point of view. I watch it, and businesses aren't doing well there, so I guess I read the same things in the paper as you do, Paul, that things are going well - one of the deceptive things I think is that we have a media and politicians that take a look at certain segments and say how wonderful it is - ah - you can sell an awful lot of oil and employ very few people in this province. The agricultural industry in Alberta, it's just on the radio now that, you know that everyone's going to sell their crop, it's the best ever, - farmers don't hire people - a lot of machinery and over the years they've taken a lot of subsidies - you have to say to yourself - whoops, what's going on here. You know, the economy, if you look at the dollar value, is probably doing great here, but there's no jobs involved - you mentioned nurses - my wife works in a hospital, so I have a very biased view on that too because she basically took a 30% cut this last year - so that affected us, but it affected a lot of people.

It remains to be seen whether the increasing pressures on the middle-class in general will contribute to a change in their individual perceptions of the lower classes, or the people who have previously been thought of in terms of their perceived 'parasitical' characteristics. Further, due to these effects, any change in perceptions could potentially range from increased stigmatization of people receiving social benefits, to an increased empathy. Most middle-class people perceive their situations as being individually unique, even though they are aware that middle-class unemployment is increasingly common, as are the marginalizing effects of increased socio-economic pressures.

It does seem that these factors are having a distinctly negative effect on the lifestyle expectations of the middle-class professionals whom I interviewed. This includes the expectations of the younger people, and the outlook of parents on the future occupational and lifestyle prospects of their children.

[2] Lowered Middle-Class Occupational and Lifestyle Expectations

An illustrative example of perceptions of needs, and expectations to governmental service provision is evidenced in the observations of this individual. As a result of budget cutbacks, this person was demoted in title, and subsequently found her occupation too demanding and interfering with her home life. She had not felt badly about even more hours spent working before, than after her demotion; but now she resented the interference with her home life, due to the restructuring and consequent increased stresses of the job.

> P. There had been a lot of stress at work, for a long time. And part of it, but only part of it was the fact... of the reorganization 2 years before I ended at the - that was crushing. The other part of it was there was always too much to do, and I was there 'till 6pm virtually every night.
> R. So you were doing ten hour days and night-times and evenings?
> P. Ah... fewer night-time evenings with this last one - so 6 was a typical cutoff time. Um... ah,... I didn't like that by that time, because I didn't have a life and I wanted to spend more time with my husband - who doesn't get home 'till 7 or 8 anyway, but - I couldn't tell him I wanted him to come home and do something that's fun tonight, if I wasn't able to get home either. So if I had been able to say "at 4:30 I'm walking out the door and I don't care about everything that's still on my desk," then I could have told him "look, can't you come home at 6 at least, so that we can do something tonight and spend some time together tonight that we're not, just, having time to eat supper, do dishes, read the paper, go to sleep." And,... I didn't like... our life. That, that part of it 'cause we were both working... with too much pressure, and, ah,... no sign that things were ever going to be better.

For this young professional woman, even the ability to have children and be a 'traditional' mother has become subject to the uncertainties of unemployment. These expectations cannot be seen as unrealistic, and they are probably in many cases very similar to those of their parents.

> R. Were you also thinking of having children?
> P. Yeah - the way it's going now though it's like I'm going to be working hard, and it's sort of a different perspective than what I'd sort of grown up thinking that I'd do -- things are changing quite a bit, so - he might end up staying home with them, and I might just work.
> R. So it's much different than what you had thought of your life turning out to be?
> P. Yeah, very different.

This person, worked his way up to the position of director of an office where he worked for 15 years. Now, after being unemployed for over a year, he has ambitions and priorities which are directed more to covering basic household needs, and concerns about such things as even being able to keep a household.

> P. The thing I worried about most are my children. Whether we're going to end up living in a van down by the river. They have to be fed and they have to have clothes, and things change for them so fast it's pretty rough. And you've spent all those years [making house payments]. And you've worked on it yourself too. But even if we did [lose the house]... you know, keep the family together and have some sort of home life. I wouldn't mind making $20,000 a year and surviving you know, if we could do that.

Brenner emphasizes the broad social effects of even a small increase in unemployment.

> A bewildering variety of factors influence the mental and physical state of contemporary society, many of which are far more influential than joblessness status alone. At the same time, this study reveals that unemployment has a strikingly potent impact on society. Even a one percent increase in unemployment, for example, creates a legacy of stress, aggression, and illness affecting society long into the future.
>
> (Brenner 1977:3)

Lim (1996:173-174) comments on the stress caused by job insecurity. The employed, when faced with the prospect of unemployment, share some of the same kinds of stress as the unemployed.[4]

> Previous studies on job insecurity have shown that employees generally experienced a high level of anxiety when their jobs are insecure. Much of the anxiety arises from a lack of certainty regarding when layoffs or curtailment of job features will occur, and if it occurs at all, who will be affected. It is the ambiguity associated with the job insecurity experience which renders it a highly stressful phenomenon for the individuals.
>
> (Lim 1996:173-174)

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[4] Lowered middle-class work-related expectations are apparently also reflected in corporate publications, which, according to Johansson (1995) recently include almost no contextual information regarding the specific company, so offer very little reassurance or hope.

To end this section, it is important to note that studies have also shown that the financial stresses and changes in the family outlook have a significant effect on the relative levels of optimism among their children. Galambos and Silbersteisen (1987) did a study that clearly shows this; although the researchers are not sure as to why it appears that it is mainly the outlook of the fathers, rather than that of both parents, that seems to be associated so strongly with pessimism in children of both sexes. The father as main breadwinner role expectation is the most likely reason for this, although there are other possibilities, for example, that the mothers are more adept at keeping their negativity hidden from the children.

I make this loose hypothesis based only on informal observation. Three of the unemployed males interviewed in their homes were obviously very traumatized by the experience, and expressed extremely negative outlooks on their futures. It was obvious that they exhibited signs of depression and anxiety that was not concealed from the other family members. One man, who was so depressed in the initial interview that he had trouble being coherent, and had been unemployed for a year at that point, mentioned that he had to try very hard to keep his feelings from his children, but he acknowledged the effect that his mood had on them. The female participants, although not observed in their homes, gave me the distinct impression that they had better coping mechanisms, and ways of controlling their moods, than did the males. Some of the reasons for this were outlined in chapter six. Female primary caregivers maintain a valued role as such, even when dislocated from the paid workforce. Males, on the other hand, still tend to see their main roles as bringing in income from outside the home, and much less as caregivers in the household, (see Lero and Johnson 1994) which means that they seem to lose much more of their perceived primary purpose upon becoming unemployed. The literature and my interview data concur on the fact that working women still do the vast majority of the child raising work, and the concurrent greater interaction with the children would suggest an increased capacity to distance them from financial strains affecting the caregiver.

Still, Galambos and Silbersteisen show that the increasing general pessimism, cynicism, and experiences of pathological distresses following unemployment among the middle class definitely have a strong negative effect on the expectations of the following generations.

> The results of the path analysis support the theoretical assumption that income loss in the 1980s is a stressor that has the potential to disrupt family functioning. Those parents who experienced income loss were more likely to view their life situation pessimistically, while income gain was related to greater optimism. The effects of parental pessimism on the adolescent depended on the sex of the parent and the sex of the adolescent. Although mothers who experienced income loss seemed to be as distressed as the fathers, it was only the father's life outlook that was related to the adolescent daughter's expectations for future job success.
>
> (Galambos and Silbersteisen 1987:147)

A drop in status, income levels, job insecurity or any factors producing lowered expectations among middle class parents, then, will be translated into lowered expectations for the following generation as well, making the effects much more long-lasting than may be generally acknowledged. Further, studies such as Leana and Feldman (1992; 1995) show that the personal distress of unemployment-related trauma has a strong negative effect on the likelihood of an individual's becoming, or even trying to become satisfactorily re-employed. People who are unemployed and no longer looking for work are not included in unemployment statistics, and they are commonly classified (for example, see Stevans et al 1987) as "discouraged workers." Again, I must make it clear at this point that my participants had the general impression that unemployment was increasing, which at the time of interviewing was the case. More recently, the unemployment rate in Alberta has been reduced significantly. However, it was the perception of most of my participants, in accordance with much of the aforementioned literature, that the problem is not a shortage of employment per se, but a shortage of what they viewed as appropriate employment. (e.g. the quote in which the despondent unemployed professional remarked that there were always [minimum wage] jobs at McDonald's or Tim Horton's.)

[2a] Discouraged Workers, and a Discouraged Middle-Class

Many working and unemployed middle-class persons are expressing beliefs and observations closely linked to what Stevans et al (1987) attribute to "discouraged workers." This suggests that many of these middle-class people are having to change their occupationally progressive and related lifestyle expectations in order to conform with a general pattern of discouragement. This person, who is still working in the downsized office, but now on a contract basis, shows that even 'survivors' do not see security in the workplace as they did before the cutbacks; she even expresses surprise when her feelings of occupational security marginally increase.

> P. See I came back because we felt that we needed another income, but I didn't look at it as being secure at all. I was hired on a one year contract, with a specific purpose and I thought that was all I would end up having. And now that it's worked into the two years , you know the hope of security, the level of that has been raised. I would like to really stay now. Which is kind of odd not expecting security and going through all these layoffs and still being here.

Another survivor of the cutbacks in her particular workplace, while being able to keep her job with an additional workload, was also affected by her husband becoming unemployed due to similar cutbacks in another area of the municipality. As she says, among young people, expectations of being able to leave the parent's household at a certain age have been affected by the cuts as well.

> P. We all get along really good. Oh it's not as feasible for the children to move out with the lack of jobs. Also it's not just the child, it's the parent's too, often the only way you can help your children these days is to let them stay at home. I was a single parent for all those years so I didn't exactly have a big stash to set him off on or anything.

This unemployed person has seen only one advertised job in her area in almost ten months, and does not have high expectations of finding work in general, and especially not what she considers to be fair treatment in any new position.

> P. I'm going to apply for that one job that I saw 'cause I figured, you know... and part of it will be very hard because the planning commission did pay well, even for working 2 1/2 days I did well, for the amount I worked you know, so you have to kind of lower your expectations of... 'cause these guys are private, they're not going to pay you what...
> R. You think you might have to work twice as much for the same money?
> P. Yeah, I think so, yeah.

These two individuals, the first a person with grown children, and the second one of my younger participants, both show lower lifestyle expectations, applying respectively to retirement and employment. Both of these people express a similar *resignation* towards the changing socioeconomic situation.

> P. My lifestyle, when I retire, if I ever retire, will not be the same as my parent's. They retired very comfortably - we will not. We will not retire comfortably. That's just how things are changing so you have to be able to realize those things are happening in our society. Everyone's lifestyle is going to change, it's going to be harder to accept, for some people. People in their 30s and 40s aren't going to retire in the same style as their parents. Just as we now accept that our job opportunities aren't what our parent's were. In other words, this is the first generation that has not lived better than their parents. And my kids will not live as good as I did in the

> '70s. Our whole lifestyles are changing, and generally I won't have what my parents had when they retired, and ah, I know my sons won't,.. unless they're very very fortunate.
>
> P. And, well, part of our problem in our society is the fact that we don't take jobs that are the menial labour jobs that our parents may have done. Our parents have done very well, and we're expecting to do as well as them if not better, and I don't think we will. And people constantly complain about the immigrants and refugees that come to this country and make a lot of money, and it's because they take the menial jobs and they work at them very hard and they build themselves up through that... plus they all live in one house and pour all their income into one pot. So their work ethic is different than ours, we are now becoming the elite of the workforce, so yeah, if, I guess if you want a job, there are jobs out there, if you want to be a waitress, or if you want to work as a cleaning person somewhere.

The 'direction' in which many middle-class people see themselves 'heading' towards is clearly shown by the media emphasis on the receivers of social assistance, and the 'economic crisis' of the middle-class is clearly shown as related to social spending. In this way, these common media presentations take on an additional meaning, as illustrative of the highly stigmatic and marginal socio-economic 'destination' that many middle-class persons see themselves as heading towards. Middle-class individuals, formerly 'distanced' from, and supporting the social welfare receivers through taxation, see drastically increasing middle-class unemployment as potentially directing them towards joining this highly 'visible' category, which is another extreme form of stress and discouragement.

> In one week in the spring of 1970, Time, Newsweek, and US News and world reports all had cover stories dealing with the economic crisis, and all three focussed upon "the welfare mess" leaving the reader with the natural conclusion that the latter is the cause of the former. The argument usually runs that the welfare rolls are full of employable who are unemployed simply because, being a part of the culture of poverty, they are lazy parasites, and that much of the remainder of the welfare rolls consist of women who, being part of the culture of poverty, have no morals, (or, more generously, live by a different set of moral standards) and have flocks and flocks of illegitimate children so that they can collect more money from welfare....."everybody knows" that there is a culture of poverty and that vast amounts of money spent on welfare only help to perpetuate

> that culture. Again, we are not at all suggesting that the culture of poverty theorists subscribe to these myths,... What we do wish to illustrate is the manner in which social scientific concepts can serve as stigma theories, justifying the "varieties of discrimination" that we use to reduce the "life chances" of the poor.
> (Waxman 1977:90)

According to some of the evidence given by Strobel, (1993) Velez-Ibenez (1983) and others, the increased pressures and financial constraints on the middle class, seem likely to have affected their *cultural* perceptions of their economic environment, in a very negative way. The distinction between the middle-class and the poor was formerly based upon individual and ideological attitudes towards their individual situations in relation to the labour market. This socialized conceptual distinction between members of the middle-class and members of the poverty-stricken may now be increasingly 'blurred,' with the increasing general discouragement among middle-class individuals.[5]

One person who is still working on a contract basis in the office, described the discouragement and tensions of watching all the people being laid-off, and mentioned that at one point, the tension became so unbearable that they felt that it would be better if the entire place just closed, regardless of their own jobs.

> P. I think [tension] kinda grows and even with the support staff at the one point everyone was getting laid off and you were very worried about losing your job, and then it got to the point where there were so many cuts, we wanted this place

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[5] Maclean's Magazine (Dec. 26, 1995, p.15) included an article by Allan R. Gregg, an excerpt of which stated "These findings give voice to much more than merely our [Canadian] collective pessimism. They demonstrate quite clearly our absolute lack of faith in the existing leadership to put the brake on, let alone reverse, the pattern of deterioration of recent years." On February 5,1996, page 46, Macleans Magazine ran an article entitled "Winter of Discontent: Welfare Cuts and Layoffs Add to the Ranks of Canada's Homeless," an excerpt from which stated " ...Calgary's Connection housing society, says the agency has witnessed a 10 to 20 percent increase in appeals for help every three months for the past 2 1/2 years, and federal and provincial cutbacks are responsible." Maclean's January 8 cover story headline read "Coping With Stress," and the subtitle of the five-page article, on page 32, was "Canadians look for new ways to reduce pressures that threaten their careers, families and even health."

> to close down. We wanted it to end. And then it looked like, oh golly, it might work. So then everybody was positive; they were ready to get it going and it's just been up and down, up and down. And that was really hard but there were times when everybody was ready to throw the towel in and just say let's close it and the job was a secondary thing; it wasn't, no one was really as concerned about losing a job, but let's just put this to rest. And actually when we found out the contracts [now from municipalities and by choice] were coming in and it didn't look like we were going to have to close, I was almost disappointed. Just because we psyched ourselves up.

The next two unemployed professionals dramatically illustrate that awareness of the commonality of middle-class unemployment, contributes to lowered expectations. Rather than this awareness making them feel any better about their own situation, it only makes them feel worse. There is no positive sense of 'community' shown here, rather a sense of hopelessness in the increasing competition among others in their occupational areas.

> P. And the thing is too, we rely, most of us do, on other people - we want to be around other people and we want to be a part of what's going on and to feel like - 'cause all you ever see,.. is depressing - you don't want to read the paper after a while - as soon as you're laid off - the radio - as soon as you hear 1000 people are laid-off from AGT and you go "this is another 1000 that you're competing with."

> P. I started talking to people - friends, acquaintances that I know in government positions - and they said "why would you infuriate our office by sending a resume here, when we're losing people from within." I had it already written, I even had the covering letters, you know, all done to these various people, and I started phoning, not those people, but similar people in the same offices and they said "Oh Christ if you do that and they'll just throw it in the garbage - they'll be mad at you" {laughs} and the reason being, they're firing from within.

In contrast, the next person expresses a positive feeling of belonging to a larger group of people being laid off, as this makes the person feel less 'alone' and presumably less personally responsible. A comment like this was rare in my interviewing, and it also shows a resigned attitude towards a situation which has become so common.

> P. I think that was one thing that - made the experience a little bit more - especially, you know I'd never been out of a job for 8 years either you know,

> because there was so many of us laid-off at once, you know when I got laid-off there was 5, and I mean there was so many together, I mean it's things like that so that it made those things that are really quite unpleasant about, - not quite as unpleasant.

If middle class discouragement is increasingly common, then an argument for a *class-based* division of self-perceptions related to the labour market, would be increasingly less tenable.[5] These constructions and perceptions of the 'self' and 'other,' have historically been strongly aligned in our society both with whether or not an individual works, and also with the idea of 'class' itself, as McQuaig (1995) and Waxman (1977) both show very convincingly. In these terms, it is a division that may eventually be strongly affected by the situations especially of the increasing numbers of middle-class unemployed individuals.[6] This is especially possible, since the middle-class are experiencing an 'erosion' of hope and positive social interaction not only individually, but at the levels of the family and the community. In either form or any variation, unemployment and discouragement always includes the discouraging and depersonalizing sense of dislocation from *experience of community.*

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[5] Literature on the discouragement and anxieties of the middle class in general have become so common in the popular media, that people seem to be almost 'desensitized' to these observations. For example, The Globe and Mail, on October 12, 1996, ran a headline stating "Hopes of Job Recovery Crumble: Loss of 47,000 positions last month pushes rate to 9.9 percent, second-highest level since 1994." The Lethbridge Herald (July 20, 1996, D1) story headline read "It's Sink or Swim in the New Economy", and an excerpt from the story observed that "Authors today are writing books entitled Innovate or Die and Guerilla Tactics in the Job Market...." The Calgary Herald (Jan. 4 1997, J5) presented the following statistics collected from Statistics Canada data: "In mid-1996 more than 1.5 million Canadians were out of work, an official unemployment rate of 10 percent. The unofficial rate, counting people who had given up looking for work, was at least 13 percent. In 1995, one-third of all Canadian families reported at least one wage-earner out of work. Between 1982 and 1990, three out of four new jobs created were full-time. Since 1990, just one in four have been full-time positions.

[6] Further examples indicating middle class discouragement: A story in the Calgary Herald (Oct. 26 1996, I31) shows the observations of the spouse of a person who had been unemployed for two years, and finally decided to retrain. "There's a lot of people like him out there - people who just can't take a pay cheque home," says Margaret. "They just don't show up in those statistics." She's right. And the statisticians know it. Margaret's husband is a member of that growing segment referred to as the "discouraged worker," who is not measured in Canada's official unemployment rate." In The Globe and Mail, (Feb. 21, 1997) an excerpt form a story read "High unemployment and cut-throat job competition leave those of us scrambling to gain a foothold in this treacherous economy with no choice but to take some extreme measures...We're giving our labour away free to prospective employers in the hopes they'll throw us some crumb of a paying job down the road."

[2b] Depersonalization: The Extreme Form of Marginalization

Since unemployment involves an 'introduction' to stigma and the realization of marginality, it is a *depersonalizing* transition. The next quote shows an unemployed person anticipates a process of depersonalization and vulnerability, in having to look for a job, after 13 years in the same position.

> P. And will I find the people to be as good as where I've come from, and there's just lots of different things, interviews and the whole thing, it puts everything on yourself, and feeling vulnerable and they're telling you they want this, you're no good and stuff, you have to go through this rejection stuff - you have to get yourself geared-up.

This marginalized, stigmatic conception of what used to be an *abstract category* of the unemployed 'other,' is now one that the unemployed have to consider the possibility of having 'joined.' It is the antithesis of the category they used to position themselves in. This person outlines some of the feedback she experienced when unemployed which contributed to a sense of depersonalization. She notes the ironic dualistic expectations in that, while formally working, it would be acceptable to have really done nothing all day, and being paid for it anyway, but when unemployed, you are expected to be active in certain ways.

> P. That's another thing that really drove me crazy, is, people don't respect my time anymore - that was really - I just had such a hard time with that. It seems I would just start working, get things done and so and so was supposed to come and they don't show, and then, they think I have nothing to do you know, in that way? And I'm thinking, - so I finally know - I don't wait around for people anymore - if they say they're going to be there and they're not I just go - or whatever, you have to

> because, I'd never get anything done.
> R. So you think that the general idea is that if you're not working, you're not doing anything?
> P. Exactly. 'Cause people go, "well what do you do all day?" - you know it was always legitimate - "Oh you go to work" that was fine, and if you were really questioned and you sat there all day and didn't do anything - but 'cause you went to work, you were doing something, right? And so now it's like "well, what do you do all day?" or "you should be doing this, you should be doing that" and I think - "leave me alone."

The transition into the largely pre-established and defined category of the unemployed includes a qualitative depersonalization, along with a dislocation from a socially, ideologically or symbolically-meaningful sense of community. That is why, as the following unemployed professional mentions, joining a group of people in the same situation helped him not to feel so isolated. However, *none* of my other participants had joined a group centring around unemployment, and this person did so only after almost a year of being unemployed. Notable here is the complete role-switching that it takes for this and many other unemployed professionals, from being the directors of such programs, to the more impersonal role of becoming clients within them.

> P. People are finding you jobs, and you're finding them jobs you know -- pooling resources sort of, and that's what this is, that situation here, and, um... I think that's the most effective... I know, as an employer, when I used to hire people, we had people come in, in sort of like a job-shadow situation, we'd have students come in and they were being paid for - this is one example - by government, and they were students who had dropped out of school, say, kids that were in trouble, and it was a program called "You're Worth It" through the local YWCA, so the kids would come in, and you'd give them a chance, you'd show them - we had incredible kids come in there, and there was an option down the road - if you wanted to keep them there, you could give them a 6 month position and give them some experience, so when they do a resume they've got practical experience, references, you know they get bonded, things like that really mean something -- or they at least get pointed in the direction of a career that they want to pursue. So I really think that's a good part of this program, I think that's probably the way I'll find a job, I don't know if I'm an entrepreneur - it would take a while, getting into massage therapy or something like that, but financially I couldn't just go for it, I

> don't want to mortgage, you know, a second mortgage on the house, I'm going up in debt already - I'd like to see if I could find a situation where I worked with a therapist or whatever, that I liked, and maybe work for a low fee, but do something that I like, and get the training I need.

Becoming clients was something that was very actively resisted, and such programs as mentioned above were often referred to as 'useless' or 'silly' by other unemployed professionals.

[3] Discouragement and Social Change: The Educated 'Blaming' Higher Education

Although in most cases it is impossible for me to do more than suggest possibilities regarding social or ideological change, I could see a distinctly lowered perception of the value of post-secondary education among many of my participants. Becoming educated represents a significant amount of investment in the future, and if the investment is not seen as potentially objectifiable in the workplace, or not 'worth it' anymore, the education itself may be seen as a waste of time. Depending upon which stratum of society is seen as being 'targeted,' in some cases, the 'well-educated' person's contextual awareness may in fact lead them to the conclusion that it is the well-educated who are primarily at risk. This is directly related to the high level of discouragement among many middle-class individuals. The following remarks by three different people, who all held a post-secondary degree, illustrate this kind of 'anti-education' perspective, which is not at all uncommon.

> P. I'm looking at this situation in Alberta as the beginning of a brain-drain, because we're spending a lot of money in the colleges and universities and technical schools to educate people, but at the same time we're dismantling the civil servants which is where a lot of those people gained employment before, so what we're really doing, say with nursing for example, we're exporting our nurses to Texas, so we're subsidizing the health system in Texas: and the same thing is happening with

> teachers, doctors are looking elsewhere, all sorts of other professions. For some there will be opportunities through privatization but for most there won't be. There's a significant downsizing that goes along with all of this.
>
> P. That's the trend you know they're talking about tuition increases and then I'll say, we have overeducated our, we have generally overeducated everyone in this society, and we have got a situation where ah, people are overeducated and underemployed, and of course we also have the situation where they talk about - they like to talk about in terms of the tourist industry and stuff. I hate to say it, but you put someone through and you pay thousands and thousands of dollars for them to come out with a bachelor of arts, in anything, and language, history or whatever, and they end up making beds, and we think, that's where they go in this society - we don't have to get that education if that's where our society is going. And our tax base can't carry that.
>
> P. And so I think as society, well we shot ourselves in the foot that way, and it seems like, well you can't believe that someone with a masters or a PhD is going to have to go around scrubbing floors for a living, it doesn't seem right. But, somewhere along the way we've wound up with too many people becoming too educated, I don't know if that's the problem?

This kind of attitude seems to be increasing in scope due to unemployment and especially underemployment, where subsidized higher education is becoming another target along with the subsidization of people on social assistance. There is an increasing folk perception that maybe we do not require such costly, extensive levels of higher education. This folk perception works dialectically with government cutbacks directed at many of the professional positions requiring higher education, since evidence of unemployment or underemployment of highly educated individuals is taken as visible 'proof' of the wasting of money on higher education - it becomes a circular reinforcing process.[7] This person sees this process as having to do with massive deconstruction of professional occupational fields.

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[7] It is also a folk perception reinforced by concrete situations and the media. Neither the government or the public wants to see their tax dollars 'wasted' on higher education that does not lead directly into productive employment. The following excerpt from an article in the Lethbridge Herald (Nov. 23, 1996, B8) illustrates the kind of media attention this issue is receiving in local areas of Alberta: "They're the thousands of university and

> P. Yeah, the only one that comes out smelling like a rose is Ralph Klein and Steve West and the jerks like that, because Ralph is fulfilling his mandate - that's a very easy promise to fulfil - it is, just fire everybody from these type of positions - get rid of them - so what if we're all on unemployment or working at Tim Horton's - he has done what he said, at a tremendous cost.

[4] Chapter Summary

The contexts described in this chapter, show the general marginalization of the middle-class, and associated tension, discouragement, and a depersonalization heightened by an apparent pattern of nuclear family withdrawal, and lessening of realization of community outside of the workplace. All of these perceptions come from the understandings of my small group of participants, and cannot be seen as reflecting the dominant ideology, or any majority opinion. They should be seen, in part, as the discouragement that results from situations of dismissal and states of trauma.

However, these understandings are also indicative then of the kinds of outlooks and altered expectations that can stem from circumstances of dislocation; and these lowered expectations can be heightened through trauma, and also 'spread' in the sense of social change and ideological change. When the governments at provincial and federal levels are encouraging increased self-reliance of citizens, in the form of less government service provision, increased privatization, and so forth, along with severe cutbacks in public spending in general, this 'encouragement' combined with objective realization of tenuous

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college graduates pouring out of school each year armed with a degree, a hefty student loan, and no job. For 35,000 of them to date in the 90s, the answer has been obvious. Go bankrupt. Not much there to lose except the student loan. Together, these impoverished Gen Xers have gotten rid of $277 million in federal student loans that way since 1990 - an average of about $7,900 each. ...and it's not just the student loan that gets discharged, he said. Many of them have been living on credit cards to get through school and can't pay that debt either. "They go bankrupt because they have no choice," he said. "They end up being harassed by collection occupational positions, takes on the form of a consciously 'directed' (re: 'encouraged') ideology of being able to rely less, and thus expect less in the form of government-provided services.

This represents ideological and social change, although the trauma associated with it likely has much more to do with individual, personal circumstances and perceptions of threats to lifestyles. In effect, what seems to be the most traumatic element of this 'new ideology,' is that people such as my participants feel that not only their jobs, but their agency itself has been taken away. This is the case even if, with careful consideration, they had voted in favour of severely decreased public spending; they feel that their agency was ignored not in the voting, but in having no voice in the implementation. The experience of unemployment is a dislocation from all of these crucial socially-interactive contexts, meanings and understandings. This dislocation is aptly framed using Turner's elaboration of the state of liminality as shown in the next chapter.

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agencies - and harassed is not too strong a word - and sometimes they really have no choice."

CHAPTER TEN:

LIMINALITY: DISLOCATION FROM SOCIETAL STRUCTURE AND THE MORE PERSONALIZED WORKPLACE STRUCTURES

In this chapter, the experience of the liminal state is looked at from several main angles. In the first section, I begin with a brief explanation of why liminality is an appropriate conceptual term in the context of the experience of unemployment. In this section, I concentrate on the more 'standard' usage of the term, as it refers to dislocation from mainstream societal structure, so that the liminal unemployed person feels that they are in an ambiguous, 'interstructural' situation, having lost their societal positioning. I also discuss ways in which this liminal state, while meant to be temporary in any transition rituals, becomes increasingly ambiguous in the context of the unemployed individual, who has no definite knowledge of any future reincorporation in another positive societal position.

In the second section I examine the liminal experience as it relates to dislocation from the highly symbolic and personalized position in the structure of the specific workplace and occupation. Included here is a discussion on liminality as a form of dislocation from the highly objectifying workplace position, and the very personal social interaction in that microcosmic context.

In section three, the experiences of survivors of the cutbacks are emphasized, in order to show distinct similarities between the people still working and the unemployed. This further shows the importance of the specific workplace, and the workplace family, since these people describe the same kind of traumas as the unemployed. This section is intended to show that it is the disruption of the specific workplace structuring, and altering of characteristics of the workplace environment and individual positions, which is centrally relevant to both the people still working there as well as to the unemployed. These observations indicate that the dislocation from characteristics of the specific occupational, social and workplace position and structures are more directly related to the experience of unemployment and liminality, than the dislocation from broader societal antithetical characterizations of the categories of working as opposed to non-working people.

In section four, I show some of the individualism and variation in experiencing unemployment, in relation to the ability to construct objective meaning through structured activities outside of the workplace. Individual agency and differences cannot be ignored in the context of experiences of unemployment, or in assessing the degree to which individuals do or do not experience liminality upon unemployment.

[1] Applicability of the Liminal State to Experiences of Unemployment

The concept of liminality was originally developed in the context of ritual, specifically in certain rites of passage, as the 'in-between' stage. For example, in puberty rituals or marriage ceremonies, it is common for people to be taken through a stage of transformation. They are neither adolescents anymore, nor quite adults; not single, but not quite married, and so forth. This stage is thus a processual one; it has a beginning and an end, and in the traditional usage of the term liminal, it referred to a relatively short process towards something looked upon as societally desirable - a 'forward movement' so to speak. Arnold Van Gennep originally developed the idea of liminality as a period of transition.

> Thus, although a complete scheme of rites theoretically includes pre liminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and post liminal rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated.
>
> (Van Gennep 1960:11)

Van Gennep saw three main stages in a ritual sequence, and this is how the concept has been used in anthropology and elaborated upon, principally in the work of Victor Turner.[12] Turner more specifically tried to define the central characteristics of liminality, realizing that it was a temporary situation, specifically designed to ritually emphasize transitions, with a distinct beginning and an end.

> If our basic model of society is that of a "structure of positions," we must regard the period of margin or "liminality" as an interstructural situation.... Such rites indicate and constitute transitions between states. By "state" I mean here "a relatively fixed or stable condition" and would include in its meaning such social constancies as legal status, profession, office or calling, rank or degree."
>
> (Turner 1967:93)

As Turner defines a "state," it then includes all of what the workplace position objectifies: "legal status, profession, office or calling, rank or degree." Although this is not the context in which Turner was describing and elaborating on the social-psychological state of liminality, job-losers *are socially dislocated* from all of these meaningful "states."

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[12] More recently, scholars have been critically examining Turner's elaborations on the liminal state, and some have been comparing his work with that of van Gennep's, in different contexts. for example, see Tsuda (1993) for an application of the liminal state in the context of the Japanese university experience. Another article (Stevens 1991) looks at liminality in the context of the funerary rituals, and the transition from elder to ancestor in West Africa. It has been noted that in western society, we have rituals for many 'upwards' transitions, but relatively few for transitions such as that of job-loss. Newman (1988) talks about this absence of ritualized transitions of job loss, and this is associated with feelings of isolation and lack of closure upon becoming unemployed. See Athens (1995), for a social-psychological discussion on self-change transitions, from a perspective which asserts that many people whose former self-identities have become fragmented, will never achieve satisfactory transition, or closure.

This unemployed person described her feelings using several analogies, such as death and passage through doorways, that are commonly associated with liminal states.

> P. To me, you know, what it was like, this is a weird analogy probably but it's like, it's like when you die, you don't know what's beyond eh, and you have to sort of walk that path by yourself - it's the same thing, we all knew some of us were going to get the axe, it's not as if, in a similar way, because you have to um, go on your own eh. You lost your job, you're out, you do your own thing. Figure out where you're going.
> R. There's a concept called liminality, which essentially involves taking people out of their world, and during this time, you are not in your old world, but not yet in a new world, kind of 'in-between.'
> P. Limbo - yeah it is kind of like that, because you know you can't go back to what you had, and you know you have to go through another door to something else.
> R. So you're thinking you probably will work part-time again?
> P. I think I will, probably will, but you know it's almost like you, I was at the planning commission for so long, that I'm sort of afraid of doing it [again] even? 'Cause 13 years, that's a long time to spend in one place, and the idea almost, it's just like the interviews, all the stuff you have to go through. It's almost like, it's like when I left the commission I walked through a door, you know I left there, like we all keep walking through these different doors into different rooms that have different experiences for us; so I left that experience and I walked into the one I'm in right now. And I know that there's a door right there waiting for me to go through but I have yet to go in there to see what is beyond, but it is there.
> R. So it's scary too?
> P. It is, it is scary.

The next person expressed his feelings another way, also using interesting analogies involving death and grieving, as well as the analogy of divorce; again, analogies commonly linked with processual liminal states. He also notes that the introversion that can go along with these processes can involve a circularity of thought, which he sees as defeatist. The processes of this kind of liminal state would appear to facilitate this kind of circularity, since there is no ritualized reincorporation in sight, making the process a linear one to 'nowhere.'

> P. Oh really, I've been through all the fuzziness, and I think you do go through stages, um I think there's something - and I never understood this until my father

> died and, I sort of didn't go through it when my sister was killed in a plane crash - but there is a series of stages you go through - a grieving stage; and I think a person who goes through a divorce, I've talked to people who've gone through divorces and they sort of say the same thing, they go through this anger, and I don't know all the stages that they go through, but, and there is a time, I believe, that people just don't know... what to do and they sort of stand around waiting for the world to - you know, the lottery ticket to come in or for God to tap them on the shoulder and, you know, lead them somewhere, whatever, and I think that's part of the process. And "gee, I don't have very much money but, if I do this - how much risk can I take" and they spend more time I think, - I noticed that for a particular time period - I spent more time and more energy just inside my own brain arguing "can I do it or can't I, and yes I can, no I can't, yes, no, yes, no" - and it's the easiest thing is to let yourself be defeated by yourself.

This underemployed person shows that being socially dislocated can have to do with the inability to "identify with yourself." The dislocation of unemployment brings about a feeling of inability to be socially 'anchored,' and thus 'recognizable' or understandable, both to oneself and others. Her analogy of 'floating' is very appropriate in trying to describe the ambiguity of the liminal state.

> P. You find that you are just sort of floating in this other world that other people don't quite understand. Now, when people ask me what I do, I say, well my background is in interior design technology, but for the time being, I work in a day-care. Because I still can't identify with this person that's working in a day-care. That's not what I want to be doing. But I still don't ever wake up dreading this job.

When asked to elaborate on what she meant by "floating in another world," she phrased her response in terms of people not being able to understand that the familiar social and self-structuring quality of work was not always a 'natural' time-structuring, which could be continued upon unemployment. Thus two *differently structured* 'worlds' are evident, with members of the working 'world' not recognizing the structure of the other.

> P. For people who have jobs, - for people who have reasons to get up in the morning, and start doing things, that have the kind of structure to their days, can't quite understand how you can't keep that structure when you don't have a job anymore. If you're home with the kids, you have to get up 'cause the kids are up,

> so you're gonna get up and you're gonna do stuff... If you're home with no need to get up... I am personally a night person.. and I would love to stay up 'till 2am and get up at 10, just 'cause that's the way my body likes to function...10:30 at night, and I start going. But, you can't do that if you have a job - you have to go within certain structures, and... so for people to understand the fact that it's really easy to just sleep in, and to not get up - you have nothing to do - you don't have the reasons to get up.

This factor of feeling as if one has entered 'another world' upon becoming unemployed supports the applicability of this concept to the experience of unemployment. This person uses the floating analogy in a different way, in direct relation to everyday structure. It is important to note that this woman appeared to do all the household work, even when she was working outside the home. With her time being structured by household and caregiving responsibilities, she begins to think somewhat negatively about rejoining the public workforce

> P. I'm even noticing, just being home 3 days a week - the 3 extra days, in the first while, well now that it's been almost 5 weeks, I'm starting to get used to it, but you have, oh, it's like "OK Wednesday's here - what am I going to do now?" For the rest of the week you know 'cause you get in such a routine that you know you did this Mondays and Tuesdays. I did that Mondays, I did the housework and laundry; Tuesdays if I had some other stuff to do, and then I'd go working 3 days and then the weekend came, everybody was home, and doing stuff and then, then yeah for this - I'm having it hard to fill with - to get focussed - you know you kinda couldn't - do anything, like it seemed like then the housework didn't get done, I had no - set deadlines, you would just kind of - you know *you were floating*! For those first few weeks. And you always have it in your mind, like, the other [workplace] days that were structured have suddenly become unstructured because you go "well I don't have to do this today, because I can always do it - the other days" and then it's like the whole thing was shot.
> R. And I imagine, if it was me I'd think, well I'll put this off until those days, because those are the days I'll need something to do in?
> P. Yeah, yeah, yeah, or then like you now, lets see, usually oh, or do your housework in one week, but then someone would phone, the phone would ring - then I'd go for a walk and you know do something else, the whole day's shot, you've done absolutely nothing, you know, and you feel kind of like well I didn't do anything today and you half feel guilty then, you know, and yeah, you know... it's taken a bit but I - already though it's starting to get - kind of almost a change

> like you're already starting to feel like "I don't really want to go back to work" {laughs} You know it happens very quickly I think.

Feeling as if one is in a liminal state also depends upon the lack of experience of community among the unemployed, which has been examined in chapter nine. This means also that different rates of unemployment in different regions will affect this applicability.[13] Particularly in areas of high chronic unemployment, unemployed individuals may enter into a 'community' of sorts, but as Wadel (1973:introduction) notes, these are undesirable and incomplete 'communities,' analogous to the "half-worlds" that Goffman (1963:21) describes. A feeling of being in a liminal state can depend upon degrees of isolation and lack of reincorporation, or unwillingness to reincorporate, since this would mean acceptance of stigma, marginality, and discrimination. Wadel describes this kind of situation, and the dilemmas that can arise from this restricted social interaction among the unemployed, even in an area where unemployment is very common:

> ...he needed to talk to other welfare recipients about things that would be too embarrassing to discuss with non-recipients; namely, matters regarding welfare regulations. ... For a welfare recipient to establish new relations or intensify old ones with other recipients is likely to lead to difficulties in maintaining his social standing with non-recipients in his neighbourhood and the community as a whole.
> (Wadel 1973:80-81)

Howe elaborates on one of his main categorical distinctions between the "deserving" and "undeserving" unemployed. In doing so he also points out that the morally-charged societal division between the employed and unemployed, is also used *by the unemployed.*

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[13] This does not mean that psychological trauma or social pathologies will necessarily differ in relation to regional frequency of unemployment, as has sometimes been suggested in some of the 'culture of poverty' literature. This only applies to the specific experience of liminality. Velez-Ibanez (1993) and Elias (1995) clearly show that in regions or among ethnic groups with high incidences of unemployment, the effects are just as traumatic and devastating as in areas of low unemployment.

> Many of the unemployed, realizing that those in jobs make such assessments of their moral worth, perceive that they can only resist being labelled in a derogatory fashion by invoking the same distinctions. This is done not only to distance themselves from other unemployed by engaging (or at least claiming to engage) in practices which emphasize their own moral superiority, but also to reduce the moral gap between themselves and workers.
>
> (Howe 1990:190)

When this 'community' is not a social one, but a societal category, based on the one *stigmatic* characteristic of being unemployed, the question becomes not whether the unemployed are or can be a community. More salient is the degree to which the unemployed person can maintain or find new social relationships which themselves are integral to the sense of belonging to a social community, in ways that make their self-perceptions at least not wholly negative. In areas or communities where unemployment is endemic, there is a much greater opportunity for the unemployed individual to be able to join a group of people in similar situations. In these cases, one cannot argue with Howe's (1990:12) statement that these people are not, and should not be portrayed as being in some liminal, or "limbo-like state"

Liminal states are, however, very applicable among middle-class professionals who had held steady jobs for many years, with no expectations of ever becoming unemployed, as was the case with the individuals that I chose to interview. This is very unlike Howe's study sample, as he states (1990:186-187) that in the region in which he conducted his research, many if not the majority of jobs themselves were low-paying, and rather undesirable. In many cases these jobs did not provide for much more in terms of material wealth (and likely self-worth as well) than for some of the people collecting social benefits.

My research was done in an area where the (official) unemployment rate hovered between 6 and 9%, compared with over 30% in Howe's study (1990:21-24) The people participating in my study were generally *distanced* from the unemployed by all the largely subjective moral and value-related perceptions, *as well as* by enormous objective material wealth and consumerist differences. In this case, the previously mentioned perception of 'two distinct worlds,' of the unemployed and employed, strongly justifies viewing unemployment in terms of a liminal social and structural dislocation, along with a highly traumatic 'transition' between distinctly bounded 'worlds.'

[1a] Dislocation from Societal Structure

This person describes how the process of 'dislocation' from an established position within societal structure is sometimes a slow and painful one.

> P. It took me about 3 years to get over the anger [becoming unemployed, then losing all of his considerable investment in a business venture] and I was particularly annoyed - actually it was... the hardest part was watching... your money go out the door ,working your butt off... 10-12 hours a day, and seeing you lose 5-10,000 a day. That really hurt.
> R. Oh - you had to watch that slowly?
> P. {laughs cynically} It hurt like hell. I knew what the numbers were, and just couldn't turn them around - there was no way you could turn them around - the plant was not economically viable.

Another person shows how in her case, becoming unemployed represented geographical as well as social dislocation. She had to move, largely for economic reasons, to a rather remote farmhouse about 20 miles away from the city, as soon as her anticipation of being laid off had been confirmed.

> P. We were paying $500/month there and we pay $425 here. So we've cut our cost as far as what we pay, and I knew if we didn't do it then, we, we'd never get a house, you know we could never get a house if it wasn't for [her being employed]...

> R. You actually cut your costs instead of increasing them, so that helps a bit.
> P Yeah. The only thing that did increase of course is your gas back and forth to town 'cause you're a lot further out, but you just don't go in as much, you just stay and live your life here as much as possible, but things still revolve around Darkwater.
> R. If you knew your job was secure, the way it always had been, would you have ended up buying a house in Darkwater?
> P. It would have been hard in terms of prices, but we would have probably tried to, yeah we would have tried to.

In Turner's (1967) elaboration of the concept of the liminal state, the people experiencing liminality were physically and socially isolated from the rest of the society during the time of ~~their~~ rites of passage. This unemployed professional illustrates that isolation can also result from feelings of stigma and marginalization. This is not self-imposed isolation, since the person felt that his job application rejections represented societal rejection. He could not deal with this situation after 13 years in the same workplace setting, and being promoted to director. Now he was in a different 'world,' incongruous with his previous self-perception integrated with his position in society.

> P. Yeah, they had to deal with me moping around the house, you know I still, I've always helped around the house and did more... you know that's... then you get into a situation where you hide, stay at home and you send out the resumes, 'cause you've had rejections and you start, ah,... doing as much laundry as you can and ah, everything else, just stay away from going out there - you get, you don't want to go into an interview and whatever...

The physical isolation of liminal people during rites of passage was necessary according to Turner, because their very *presence*, due to this liminal state, is absolutely incongruous with the ideological norms of the larger society.

> [Liminal neophytes] have physical but no social "reality," hence they have to be hidden, since it is a paradox, a scandal, to see what ought not to be there!
> (Turner 1967:98)

The liminal personae is one which has lost its "social reality." Much of the middle-class professional's social realities have to do with their occupational positions, workplaces, and associated consumer activities. These, along with their symbolic associations, become a "social reality" and a societal 'identity' which becomes displaced upon unemployment. The next person makes it quite clear that after a year of being unemployed, he ended up joining a program for unemployed people, *for a sense of social belonging*, even if the common factor in bringing the group together was unemployment. It was his attempt to remove himself from a liminal non-social situation, towards a 'mainstream' position.

> P. Yeah and that's what... I think everyone says that at the beginning, they say I can write a resume, I was in administration, and I had a job before and I can go out and do it, I can send out some resumes, you know, and get a job - and... it doesn't happen and then you...go this way and into programs, which aren't too bad for getting you back in the mainstream, but... what has been really effective is when they have their groups, like job clubs and that, where you take a little bit of uh, resume writing and things like that, but *the big thing is that you're in with 20 other people....*

Some of this loss of a position within societal structure is due to the strong working/unemployed ideological dichotomy, coupled with a lack of social community outside of the workplace.

[1b] Liminality, Societal "Interstructure" and Unemployment

Turner notes that structural positioning is essential to understanding of liminal state.

> If our basic model of society is that of a "structure of positions," we must regard the period of margin or "liminality" as an interstructural situation.
> (Turner 1967:93)

Because of their loss of meaningful positioning within this integral work-related positioning within societal structure, the unemployed feel that they have become only marginally a part of the social system and structures. As Newman (1989:8) points out, these people have to contend with the ..."psychological, social and practical consequences of "falling from grace" and losing their "proper place" in the world." The "proper place" she refers to is within what Turner (1967:93) has called the "structure of positions" which constitute a society. It is not only an acknowledged position within empirical structure that is lost and contributes to a sense of liminality; it is that this structure, even if only thought of as "routine" can be so strongly linked to *individual purpose*, as the following person mentions.

> P. Sitting home all day, making phone calls, is not exactly healthy. There were at least 2 other people unemployed at the same time as me, so we did do a lot of phoning back and forth and discussing how things were going. I found it very easy to sleep in, not get up, and not be motivated to do things.
> R. Did that make you feel bad?
> P. Yes it did. I wished that I could set myself this routine that would get me up at 7 in the morning and say that "from this time to this time, this is what I'm doing," and I'm going to do something else from here to here, and I could never seem to do that.
> R. So was that routine an important thing that the job provided for you?
> P. I think so, because it gives you a *purpose in your life.*

This is a very disconcerting position to be in, especially when becoming 'interstructural' implies a certain degree of "social invisibility." Newman compares the situation of the liminal initiate in a rite of passage to the experience of the unemployed middle-class manager, and notes that social seclusion or isolation are very similar in both cases.

> For both the [unemployed] managers and the initiates, liminality is a time of seclusion. While it is possible to think of the social isolation of unemployed managers as an unintentional affair, the result of income loss or the estrangement of friends, this is not how the unemployed themselves experience it. They feel they have been actively shunned, placed at arm's length by their peers, just as surely as tribal initiates have been sequestered from the rest of the village.
> (Newman 1988:91)

Turner relates the effect of social isolation to a strong "pollution concept," following the ideas put forth by Mary Douglas (1966).

> [Mary Douglas] holds that, in effect, what is unclear and contradictory (from the perspective of social definition) tends to be regarded as (ritually) unclean.... From this standpoint, one would expect to find that transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there, or may be nowhere (in terms of any recognized cultural topography), and are at the least "betwixt and between" all the recognized fixed points in space-time of structural classification.
>
> (Turner 1967:97)

One person reflects on his feeling exactly this way, as if he [and unemployment] were a "contagious" disease.

> P. Right when I got laid-off, there was just steady people being laid-off um.... with..... I was going to say... another thing that I've found is that people here still employed start to avoid you like the plague, because it brings them down - they don't want to associate with you - some people can see beyond it, but some people they're afraid of you -it's contagious, if I'm not in then I'm going to get it too or whatever.

Wadel observes, even in an area with high levels of unemployment, that the state of unemployment is perceived as contagious.

> ... one man on welfare is thought of to sway his neighbour over to his way of life. the major evidence for such a process is the fact that "they always stick together," implying that they have a bad influence on each other. Many people also argue that welfare "seems to be in the family." A common statement among working men is that when one Jones applies for welfare, he entices his brother to apply and they, in turn, entice their cousin and then they marry and get their in-laws into it.
>
> (Wadel 1973:90)

It is the abstract characterization of the category of the unemployed which makes the experience of unemployment a potentially liminal state; the unemployed enter an ambiguous societal and social structural and conceptual 'placement,' along with taking on the stigmatic quality of potential pollution.

> In fact, in confirmation of Dr. Douglas's hypothesis, liminal personae nearly always and everywhere are regarded as polluting to those who have never been, so to

> speak, "inoculated" against them, through having themselves been initiated into the same state.
>
> (Turner 1967:97)

Following Turner's observations, other people who had been through the same experience would be the only ones who would be likely not to think of the liminal personae as polluting, since they would have been "inoculated" through similar experience. One person, who expressed much less trauma in her situation than most people I interviewed, had experienced the effects of unemployment several times. Her husband used to be in an outdoor trade that necessitated seasonal layoffs. This previous experience, which we could consider as 'inoculation,' made a significant difference in her attitude.

> P. Everyone sort of expects that you should be working, and they almost expect that you should be depressed, down and out, and, you know, "how are you doing" and everything, you know, "I'm fine!" But I also, I am a positive person, and I just kind of think, well there's a lot worse things that can happen you know, than to lose your job. Well maybe that comes from having a husband that lost his job, you know so many times that, you know, life goes on. I mean - there's other jobs out there, it may not be a month or two, but, you know, something will happen, like, if you think any other way, then yeah, you'll think into a hole and get real depressed. And it might have been different if you had to go right on UIC right away, and say, financially it would be hurting more, then, you know that's different too, 'cause yeah, we've been in that boat too - you know there's a lot of times he was the only wage, and here we were waiting 3 months for the UIC cheque to come, the first one - then, that is a different kind of sort of a thing. But you know, with the severance and everything, it took that away you know - that sort of problem -so you don't have that [waiting] this time. So maybe that's why I look on it even more positively than other people - you know, things are going on and I have time to look for something.
> R. And like you said, which no other [participant] ever said to me - "there's a lot worse things that could happen." And I especially know that because you've got 3 children.
> P. That's the thing, I mean there's all kinds of things - kind of always had that philosophy, through like when my husband would get laid-off and like money would be tight and stuff and then I'd hear something about someone and I'd go "well it's not that bad you know," or somebody gets sick or it's like, you don't have that problem at least.
> R. So you look an the positive side, generally.

P. I do (laughs) that's my nature.
R. That can be terribly helpful, just as a characteristic.

As Newman says, societal status incongruity of the unemployed middle-class professional relegates these individuals to a position which is at the same time ambiguous, contradictory and threatening.

> Unemployed and underemployed executives are anomalous creatures too. Their existence is as threatening to the cognitive order of managerial culture as tabooed creatures are to some tribal peoples. The talented ex-manager is a living contradiction. How can there be a manager who is hardworking, experienced, intelligent - and can only find a job as a file clerk?
>
> (Newman 1988:92)

Newman elaborates on the impossibility of societal 'positioning' of this abstract category of the unemployed, again using the disease metaphor, which relates to a dominant societal unwillingness to acknowledge the 'existence' of unemployment among the middle-class.

> Their fate inspires fear in others who may worry that they too will become living contradictions. Some technologically simple peoples believe that close contact with an individual in a liminal state is contaminating. Technologically complex peoples often have the same response. Forty-Plus members feel they are treated as carriers of a contagious disease. In a culture where people half believe that good luck can rub off, one also finds the lurking suspicion that to associate with the occupationally disabled is to court contamination.
>
> (Newman 1988:92)

The unemployed person may also feel as if they are being treated as if they were diseased and contagious, and may internalize these perceptions. Or they may already share the same dominant societal perceptions of the category of the unemployed. In either case, as Goffman notes, the realization of the *experience* of being considered as 'diseased' and 'polluting,' represents a transition from abstract characterization, to concrete realization of the personal affects.

> The stigmatized individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do; this is a pivotal fact. His deepest feelings about what he is may be his sense of being a "normal person," a human being like everyone else.... Further, the standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for minutes, to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be.
>
> (Goffman 1963:7)

[1c] Liminality and Internalization of Stigmatic Categorizations

Established position within societal structure is highly integrated with internalized ideas of positive individual purpose. This person states that the structured routine of the workplace is very important to her, whether or not she finds the job rewarding. The feelings of 'non-structure' are very unpleasant to her, even though to some extent, she also values the freedom.

> P. I would say to myself "OK I'm going to get up at this time and then everyday I'm going to get up now, and do some aerobics, and do this now, real nice structure, and usually that worked 2 days out of the 5 and then... it was freer in some respects 'cause you could go out and do anything you wanted any time of the day, but I also missed having that structure.
> R. When you were working at the job that you didn't find fulfilling, was the structure still important?
> P. Yeah, I had been going to school, so you get a certain structure in going to school, and I was off for about 4 weeks before I started that job, and those 4 weeks were very long. Pretty boring. I knew I had a job, but it wasn't starting for a while, and it was good to have, just to let you know what you were doing every day.

This professional person reflects on his unemployment, illustrating the power of the felt work-related norms, and the resistance to being viewed by others as unemployed. He went so far as to dress everyday as if he were still professionally employed, and only shop during lunchtime, until he realized that some people work shifts, so that his scheme was unnecessary.

> P... if I wanted to go and buy a pair of socks or something, I would always go between 12 and 1.
> R. Oh, so everybody would think...
> P. That I was on my lunch break - I would dress the same way as I dressed when I worked - I couldn't go in jeans and sneakers, or, if I had to go and get something, say to repair something - I needed some lumber and stuff - I would dress, without shaving, I would dress, ah,.. as though I was in construction, and then I could go at 9 in the morning or 10 and stop and grab the stuff you needed and with the beat-up clothes and you know you looked like you'd been in construction and there's concrete on your boots and dirt on your shirt - so it looked like you're working you know, you're there for the purpose.

This person felt no sense of community between other unemployed people and himself, and he also thought that the unemployed in general are "terrified" of working professionals. He was actively trying to maintain the category of the unemployed as the abstract 'other,' by refusing to identify himself as one of them. He has learned how to make use of the rigid boundaries between the categories of the working and unemployed, which he calls a "big barrier."

> P. If you want to really try a little experiment, Paul, go put on a 3 piece suit, and go about 9am into a UIC office and, you have people in there, all backgrounds, all ages, etc., and they're going through the computers and looking for jobs and they're very serious to do their job search and everything and they feel as guilty as hell. They sort of, they put these walls around them - they don't realize that everyone is in the same boat here so it's not quite so bad, it's not a friendly place to be mind you, but it's not so bad, you can sneak in and get this done and get out, right? Walk in there in a 3 piece suit - they're terrified of you, simply because you look like you're employed - they aren't - they will not meet your eyes, their eyes go the other way or look down to the ground, so it is, I think it's a real big barrier.

This example strongly indicates the perception of an 'uncrossable' morally-charged boundary between the working and unemployed. Conceptualizations of the unemployed have such an extremely wide range of meanings that it certainly becomes "unclear and contradictory" from the perspective of social definition. (Turner 1967:97) This is not only an ambiguous positional placement among the general population, but is reflected in the similarly ambiguous ways that unemployment statistics are compiled.

A particularly interesting example of current studies on whether or not 'discouraged workers' should be included in unemployment statistics was done by Stevans, Register and Grimes (1987). They conclude that only those of the unemployed who are still actively looking for work, and are 'discouraged,' should be included, since those who have become sufficiently 'discouraged' to have stopped even looking, no longer have any significant "labour force attachment." This is illustrative of both dominant attitudes towards such people, and also the fact that a significant number of individuals have literally dropped out of the mainstream of working culture, and entered what I've referred to as a different, and unclassifiable 'world.'

[1d] The Liminal Without Reincorporation: Extreme Societal Ambiguity

Newman makes the point that although the unemployed professional experiences the same kind of liminal state as the initiates in rites of passage, they, unlike the initiates, do not have any concrete sense of this unsettling experience ending with their being reincorporated into a solid societal role.

> Their [initiates in a ritual] liminal experience is therefore finite: it comes to an end when they emerge and take a new place in their communities. For the [unemployed] managers, by contrast, liminality lingers on. While managers hope to emerge and regain their old occupations and identities, neither they nor their families are sure whether or when this will occur.
>
> (Newman 1988:91)

This lack of knowledge about when or if the unemployed person will be 'reincorporated' in this case generally meaning regaining satisfactory employment, is another reason that the liminal state of unemployment can be a particularly traumatic one. It also contributes further to the ambiguity of middle-class unemployment in relation to structural position.

This person had been out of work for almost a year, and had only seen one job in the newspapers that she felt a chance of getting; this gave her a definite sense of personal uncertainty of her ability to re-enter the workforce, and regain a work-related societal position.

> P. That would be something that I could probably apply for or feel I had a chance of, you know that is a secretarial position, but no there's very little [jobs available]. And there used to be you'd just have columns of secretarial type clerical positions, they don't even have them in the paper anymore. Or if they do there might be one, but there's very few, so it's like there's these 6,000 people applying for a position.

One person who had been unemployed for a year felt permanently removed from mainstream society. This particularly included being left out of recent developments in his field, which lowered his expectations of reincorporation even further.

> P. ...still do you know it's been a year, you do try to keep in touch but still at the same time when you leave something like that... and you... there are parts that you didn't like, you have, um... I went through... you know, the...I guess the peaks and the lows... you say, "Jesus, was it my fault?..."and then you go up, and say "hey, I'm glad to be out of there after going down in that hole [basement office] for all those years -- why didn't I get out of there sooner... it's a good thing this is over with..." and then the next day or the next week you might be down again, thinking "what did I do wrong, you know, why was it my job?," or, you know, "how are you going to feed your children," or "what is there, what can I do," you know or...especially you know, I'm 41 now and at the time I'd just turned 40 - everything is just bang and you think "who can you get to market yourself?" and its... all these kids are coming out of high school and university - they've got all the technology, and... here I am, selling myself for the same job and, and I've got a wife, 3 kids and a mortgage and I'm getting old fast.

However, some individuals (a decided minority) seem to have actually made a transition towards a individually-felt positive status as unemployed, see value in a different kind of position and structure, and are reluctant to give this up. The following person (also unemployed for a year) feels that she has made a very hard adjustment in her values and lifestyle as unemployed, and doesn't want to give up this reincorporation without assurance of a satisfying full-time position. Still, she knows that reincorporation in middle-class western society is not really feasible without working enough to meet basic necessities. It should also be noted that the severance package and subsequent U.I.C. subsidization have made the following positively-perceived transition possible for this person.

> P. I just applied for one yesterday. It's only a 16 week position, but, we'll see - in some ways I thought - to me, almost I hope I don't get it. Because, to me, you know starting a new job is stressful enough and then just for 16 weeks - it just seems like too much hassle, you know for 16 weeks, I don't know.
> R. Especially since you spent a lot of time restructuring your life by changing your whole way of thinking?
> P. Yes, yes, and that's it exactly - see, now I'm finally in a routine that's working? And now I don't want to all of a sudden be taken out of it to start somewhere else for 16 weeks, and then start all over again. Because right now I am doing a lot of things, you know they're not paying things, but they're things that I really like to do. And so - it would be almost like you're going to ask me to quit doing those things, to go to war for 16 weeks, you know and then start all over again. I guess now - you sort of get a bit afraid actually, you know, if I'm honest, that's what it is. Because you get out of it for so long, that I think "oh am I ready for this?" But, I know it's going to be hard, like I have no doubts about that - probably the first 2 weeks I'm going to be dead after every day. 'Cause of the pressures that you're not used to anymore - I think probably that's what's behind that. And you know what it is, it's getting your mind - see I felt - this is what I feel - I have taken 11 months to get out of this busyness, 'cause I was so used to it, so you, now it's like you're putting that all in front of you again and I figure, and I think oh!, we got to start all over again, but you know hopefully I mean I've learned a few things now so hopefully I'll take that with me this time. I've learned a lot in the last year, you know how I would change things, that is what I mean too and that, that I, you know, I'm not going to like, you know I've got to learn to say no to different people and different things, so you're not just, like, everybody else "I'm so busy, I'm so busy, I'm so busy" I mean it is a busy time, but we've got to quit that I think, sometimes.

This individual had been able to reconstruct a valued routinized set of activities and become 'reincorporated' or socially positioned without paid work, but this transition took a year, and would not have been possible without financial support. This does indicate, however, that dominant value systems regarding work and societal position are not shared by everyone, and can be changed at the individual level, if basic necessities can be met.

[2] Dislocation From Specific Occupational and Workplace Structure

An important part of loss of social structure refers directly to workplace position, and *this may well be the more meaningful structure*, as I have already shown the central importance attached to the specific occupation and workplace in chapters four and five. This individual relates the agony of the transition to becoming unemployed directly to social relations in the specific workplace.

> P. But the longer you're away, the less frequent you touch base with them, your life kind of goes on you know. So it's like a phase of your life, sort of like letting go, it's a slow, it's just gradual too, you never stop thinking of those people, 'cause you all had good friendships there and you often wonder what so and so's doing now, how he's coping...

Dislocation from social and occupational workplace structure as opposed to broader societal structure has to include much more personalized understandings of position. The elements of individual agency, practice, distinct occupational and social parameters and strong personalized associations operate within a distinct microcosmic setting. This necessitates an examination of the effects of dislocation from these more symbolically-personalized positions, within a similarly personalized, less abstract structural context.

Distinctly personalized structure is found in the specific context of the workplace as collective habitus, and the feelings of 'family' within workplace and field parameters. These are parameters that individuals, through practice and interaction, contributed to shaping in a more direct sense, than the structural and ideological parameters of the larger environment. The phenomenon of layoffs can abruptly accentuate the reality that the workplace position is not one of isolation from larger society, or removed from unpredictability, as the following person says. Following the way that she expressed her situation, I suggested the analogy of specific occupational position as a marriage, involving commitment to the job and employer. She elaborated on this analogy, indicating that it was an appropriate one to her. The loss of such a highly personalized position was analogous to a divorce, and has made her rethink her ability to be so personally committed to the employer or institution, since they are now seen as "vulnerable."

> P. Yeah - there were parts of [unemployment] that were fine. And I kept telling myself that I've learned from this and I'll never let myself be so consumed by work again. But I'm working again and I'm just as busy... as ever... I don't, I don't stay 'till 6, because.... the job isn't that busy yet, but I know it will be, and I know I'll be doing the same kind of thing. But I won't have the same... I hope...long-term commitment to one job. 'Cause, I don't believe... that this job .. will last forever. *I don't think that I will ever feel that way again.* And it may. But I'm not going to live my life ... as though... it's a long-term project.
> R. That sort of sounds like.... well in your case it's almost similar to if you had a bad marriage and a messy divorce, and the way that you might view marriage again.
> P. Yeah. Except, it, it was ah,... 15 years of a really good marriage, and a couple of years of bad stuff and a messy divorce. And then, like the 15 good years,... have influenced so much of your life that, that wasn't influenced even before you started work, by this work ethic that we get from someplace. that,... isn't it natural that I'm going to slip back in? And I hope that some of the things that I've learned would stay with me, and I you know I am going to make a conscious effort in the next year to get out of... a lot of the volunteer stuff that I do so that I can get back some of that time that I had when I was unemployed. Because now I've got this big chunk of my day that's gone... for work. But I want to have some time that's my time, discretionary time. So there are some things that I'm going to consciously try and do so I can get - try and find a balance between.... the two. *Its, it's partly that I don't know whether it will last and it's partly that I don't trust.* And I think that the real difference is that I, I'm still committed to work, but, but I don't have the same.... commitment to an employer. *Because what my employer... does...is, beyond my control.*
>
> [*emphasis mine*]

This is not a lack of trust in individual people, but a recognition that the institutional position is vulnerable. This indicates a prior perception of workplace context as having an almost autonomous mediatory quality in relation to the larger societal structure. This person shows that much of the meaning and symbolic gratification within the workplace must have been due to its microcosmic, more personalized qualities than those of societal structure. The highly personal relationship between this person and the workplace organization has been drastically altered by the realization that the workplace context is *not* autonomous.

> P. The other problem I have has to do with relationships - I don't trust the organization anymore. You can't trust, you can't trust government organizations. It's not that any individual is dishonest either, or that the policy that was prepared is dishonest, or anything else. But the system that's established, so that the decision will be one way one time, and another way the other time, and that, to me, is something that I didn't think would rip. I thought we tried to be consistent, things were settled, things were clear, you made a deal and stuck with it, you didn't drop back. But me as an individual... I just outright don't trust. So that's also something that's happened. So in terms of how the organization has dealt with people, then I have to wonder how will they deal with me. And I feel associated with these things just because I still work here. I don't feel guilty, about how those things were handled, because I didn't make those decisions myself, but I'm angry.

Suddenly, the realization of one's own replaceability or 'redundancy' strikes, at the same time as the vulnerability of the workplace itself is evidenced, and *the two are linked,* as the next two professional individuals show.

> P. Well, and, but my work was me, so I can't divide my work from me, so it could be that they didn't like the way I did my work, but, but that's still me, and so I'm, I'm still guilty - I got fired. So it was either me as my personality traits, or what I was doing, how I was doing it, or a combination of it.

> P. And I don't think that Ralph Klein or any jerk has any right to pull that off on somebody. Even if you've invested all your life saving and everything into a company, and then you have to haul up all the employees and say look we're in big trouble, the bank's going to pull out, sorry we're all going to be broke - I've done

> my best to try and help you and your families, I can't do anymore, if you want to get mad at me- go ahead but I really did my best - you know. Even if it's that, they will still walk away knowing that it wasn't them personally...That it wasn't really their fault.
> R. Well, he doesn't have to think money like you do - he just says well, we'll take this much here and this much there, and let them deal with it - so it trickles down somehow, and everyone tries to deal with it.
> P. Well it doesn't trickle down, what it does is the avalanche hits at the bottom of the heap. Guys at the top of the hill just stand back and watch her go by and it's the guys at the bottom that take all the rocks, the trees and stuff that go down with them.

The next person describes how the recent layoffs were very different than the earlier ones, since she saw the earlier ones as merit-based. Since the recent layoffs were due to massive indiscriminate cutbacks, she saw them in a bit less personal terms, not in regard to merit. This also meant that they were not seen as logical in a causal sense; consequently, the arbitrary and unpredictable nature of the layoffs caused such tension, that she describes a sense of relief when her position was finally abolished.

> P. And, in the last year, I think most of us knew that there were going to be more layoffs. But we thought it wouldn't be until this next Christmas or so, so it was something of a surprise when [the director] came in and said "well there's no way we can keep this position." I sat down right in my office with her 'cause [the director] was shaking so bad. And we're good friends, and a lot of years together. In some ways it was relieving, because we've had the wondering for 12 years or so, and it was like someone turned up the heat again. There didn't seem to be that sort of competition this time. There were more people already out there looking for jobs, who had been laid off already. So there was a tension between searching for other work, and not knowing whether you should stay in a position that seemed insecure. So in some ways, upon being laid-off, you at least knew where you stood, and that you now should start looking for work.

This person, who had started a business with significant capital investment, illustrates several different ways in which cutbacks invaded the personal lives of individual professionals.

> P. When that plant went down, I had no money - I couldn't do anything, really - no jobs out there, and I had daughters, teenage daughters that said to me "Dad, why don't you go and become a teacher" - I had degrees in economics, and history and business administration, and municipal administration, and I said you know "go and teach, we have some real jerk teachers teaching some of those subjects - go do it," - so that's why I went to the university - and the college at the same time - full course load at the university, plus I had to take typing/secretarial courses at the college, and it was supposed to be 2 years - I did it in 1 1/2 years. Lot of hard work, and then when I got out, all of a sudden they said, - you know when I checked into it they had a professor at the university, said "oh, we have a tremendous demand for business education teachers - all of us got school boards after us" - a year and a half later - zero jobs. absolutely zero, and the they started really pruning the teachers in the education system, and ah, now in the last few years it's been to try and concentrate on the 3 R's and they think that things like computers, typing, accounting are frills. Huh! sorry, I'd have to say the kids who walk out of high school and make the most money, they were the kids who took business education - they didn't fool around - they weren't learning poetry - but that's just my opinion.

Individuals, both unemployed and survivors,[14] are forced to accept the realization that the properties of the field-related workplace as mediatory towards the larger society, are no longer relevant, as larger political and economic forces cause massive layoffs.

[2a] Dislocation From Objectification of Personal Interests in the Workplace

The professional workplace has been emphasized here as a primary context for the objectification of self- and collective interests. Meaningful symbolic practice occurs in the workplace habitus, that allows agents to objectively realize their creative potential within social, occupational and institutional frameworks. As well, the workplace habitus represents the coalescence of individual habituses that have been shaped by their own histories and development of individual interests. As the executive director of a field-specific workplace shows, the provincial approach denying the saliency of the entire field, implies a distinct kind of *personal ideological redundancy* to agents who identified in so many ways with the field.

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[14] Most studies of unemployment treat the surviving workers as a separate category, and they may be seen as such mainly with regard to situation. In this project I chose to integrate the narrations of the survivors with those of the unemployed, for two main reasons. First, this specific workplace was so decimated as to almost close down completely, so the trauma of the survivors was very similar to that of those laid-off. Second, the laid-off referred their unemployed situation so much in relation to their former *collective* workplace experience, that not surprisingly, the narrations of both survivors and the unemployed in this study population were often very similar, or complementary. For studies that concentrate more directly on the category of the 'survivor,' see for example, Brockner and Carter (1985) and Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt and O'Malley (1987). In recent times of drastic socioeconomic change and high levels of occupational insecurities, what once could be accurately described as 'survivors,' would, as in the case of my study, be more correctly referred to as 'possible survivors,' who, because of job insecurity, experience the same degree of tension, trauma and ambiguity as do the unemployed.

> P. I can buy into the streamlining, and I can buy into the deregulation and the unnecessary red tape. But then you just wonder if it crossed the threshold of becoming a bit of a 'witch-hunt,' and, when did it become that. And when your budget has been cut by 63% [total operating - 100% provincial support] then is this a premeditated effort to just disband the whole regional planning ordinance. and then what was it going to be replaced with? So [the minister's] approach was, the money first, and this is what irritated me too, it's the money first, and we'll sort out all the legislation later. And then [the provincial municipal affairs dept.] start to grapple with the legislation, and they're tearing their hair out here. You start to pull one string, of this regional planning legislation, that's been in this province for over 50 years, everything else starts to unravel.

The following person shows the perception that it is the middle-income people who seem to be the most devastated upon unemployment. They have been dislocated from what they thought was the attainment of a 'successful lifestyle,' associated with objectification of the self as having an essential, well-established role in the workplace 'family.' These considerations are as important to the individual social agent as ideology is to a culture. When the microcosmic setting where practice can be realized is 'taken away,' so is the ability to realize main characteristics of individual agency, including the ability to rationalize educational investment, as this person shows.

> P. The ones that I've seen, that look the most beat up, and they're beating up on themselves, are really middle-income, what used to be considered middle-

> management types. They always felt that ah, they'd risen above - Daddy always said it was the [immigrant] that came over and said you got to go and get an education; get an education and they went and they bought that dream, they did the education, they got the nice job, got the wife and all the stuff and are going in the right direction and all of a sudden - swack!

The cutbacks, aside from causing loss of position, also caused people at managerial levels to initially move 'down' to positions 'below' them. This transition of reversed expectations, invalidated workplace structural positioning that had been achieved through very hard work, in the context of well-understood workplace progression. This person shows the nature of this progression in the land-use planning field, and how it was rendered meaningless due to initial cutbacks and restructuring.

> P. My degree is bachelor of environmental studies with honours in urban and regional planning, in 1975 from the university of Waterloo. I worked 5 1/2 years as a planner in Ontario... and that was like a planner in a small municipality in eastern Ontario, and, during that time, I qualified for membership in the Canadian Institute of Planners, which is the professional association for planners in this country. Then, after 5 1/2 years there, I moved to Alberta, to my first job with the employer, which is the City of Darkwater. I was hired as planning superintendent, with responsibility for approving subdivisions and developing long-range plans for the municipality - I did that for 5 1/2 years, and then became economic development director for the city. That had responsibilities for business development, tourism development, and also land development because the city is the largest residential land developer in the community, and also the only industrial land developer there was. That was 1987 - I have to get my dates here - there was a restructuring with the first wave of cuts, in 1991, and... the position of economic development director was ..... was shifted - the, I had previously reported to a manager, his position was eliminated, he became the economic development director and I became the land director, so in effect my responsibilities shifted and I was responsible for 1 of the 3 areas I had been responsible for before. Um...and... so I was land director for....... 2 years.. and at the time of the first set of cuts my manager's job was eliminated, and.. but he was...
> R. He bumped down into your position?
> P. Yes, he bumped down and the person who had been doing .. the land function for me... reporting to me on land was terminated. So I was doing what had been half of my job before, on land development, and one other person's job.

This personalization of a very specific workplace position and progression, is due in large part to the expectation of being able to continue individual developmental educational 'pasts,' that can only transform into the objectified present and future through workplace practice. The following person illustrates the disillusionment that follows from not being able to reach the workplace as object of the educational progression. The value of education itself markedly decreases when workplace position and practice is seen as unattainable.

> P. I came out with a bachelor of arts and I went through, well, the late '70s, and as I say, that's in my point of view - the recession really hit in '78, and then we went through the slump of '82, and, we haven't recovered. During that period, our government pushed more and more people to be educated, and have expectations where they were going to be employed with that education -look at how many teachers we have and we're still cranking out teachers, and ah, what are we going to do with all of them?

The workplace as habitus also represents the coalescence of many kinds of *capital* in the sense in which Bourdieu uses this word (1977, 1984). We commonly hear phrases such as 'education is an investment in one's future.' It is not unusual, then, to refer to what are really personal attributes or characteristics as economic 'capital,' as we find in the current use of the term 'Human Resources.' As Bourdieu expresses it, educational capital is very closely related to cultural capital (1984:13). The objective value of educational capital depends more closely upon how it is used, as the level of educational capital rises.

> Because of the long hysteresis of the mode of acquisition, the same educational qualifications may guarantee quite different relations to culture - but decreasingly so, as one rises in the educational hierarchy and as more value comes to be set on *ways of using knowledge and less on merely knowing.*
> (Bourdieu 1984:80)

Bourdieu is commenting on what could be called 'educational socialization,' which includes the idea that if education is an investment, then it is only a good one if it leads to a successful career position. Part of educational socialization, then, involves direct socialization towards the workplace, and consequently would increase personal identification with workplace position, once attained. In a middle-class professional workplace based around a particular field, there is the means to actively use knowledge rather than possessing it without objectively structured practice. The following survivor of the layoffs notes that there are similarities in the trauma-related needs of both those who stayed and those who left. This is because the actualization or objectification through practice, as expressed below, involves a significant amount of a sense of 'togetherness.' This sense of togetherness, or the 'collective whole,' is also subject to disruption when layoffs occur suddenly and almost completely at random.

> P. I thought we were closer than that. I thought we were more understanding. That's the other thing, I don't think we take care of those who left or those who have stayed. Because we don't have anyone to talk to. I mean this is a very mentally disturbing time. I mentioned that I think we should have counselling. For the people that left and those that have stayed. People like [other survivors] have a terrible time trying to understand what has happened. I know I was confused, you know, "just what is this?"

All of this kind of highly meaningful distinct workplace structure is lost upon unemployment, contributing to a more specific sense of dislocation than the transition between the two more abstract conceptual groups of the employed and unemployed. This person explains the integration of herself with the workplace in terms of organization, as she observes that her personal organization of self was another part of the workplace context. Being removed from this personalized context involves organizing her personal life differently, restructuring priorities, and, in her spatial analogy, moving her self to another position.

> P. 'Cause see I was here and I had my office here so that was always a place where even in my personal life I organized everything? But now I don't have that desk, you know, and so I found that has been really hard, so now I'm finally allowing myself to do it in a different way?
> R. You're restructuring your priorities?
> P. Yes. My whole way of thinking! yes, which has been really hard for me but I am finally at it now I'm *finally at that place*.

There is much evidence, then, of the highly diverse expressions which all indicate how much integration there is between the workplace position and the 'self.' Dislocation from workplace position must be seen as dislocation from integral elements of the personal habitus, or contextualized self, which has developed in an historical sense, in direct conjunction with the specific social and occupational workplace context.

I have discussed the importance of social relationships in the microcosm of the workplace in chapter five, as being another essential aspect of the collective habitus. I will use two more quotes from participants here, in order to remind the reader of the intense feelings of social dislocation which contribute to the liminal state. Again, this social dislocation is at least as personally salient at the level of structured workplace social interaction, as with regard to the societal division between the working and unemployed. The high degree of coherence of social interaction in the workplace is shown by the next person, who remembers returning to the workplace for no real reason, well after his position was terminated.

> P. Well, the first part of the layoff, I was, I was actually going into the office every day... uh, this was almost kind of a joke, that things were going well at the time and uh, I still had a few things to tie up there, and you know we were quite good friends and uh, yeah so things hadn't changed very much and, the joke was that I hadn't told my wife yet that I had lost my job -- {laughs} - I had of course.

This person, who had been unemployed for over a year, and was depressed and bitter during the first interview, had improved his mood markedly upon my re-interviewing him two months later. He had received some counselling in the area of self-esteem, but it is significant that he attributed his improvement mainly to the symbolically significant fact that during this time, his former workplace had closed entirely. Both socially and occupationally, it no longer existed as a unit.

> P. [being in this workshop group] There are 20 other people too, and they all have problems, and I got to help some of them, so that's good, it gets your mind working again, and gets you thinking, and gets your mind off those other things.
> R. so some of the bitterness and anger, you've been able to sort of 'push it back a bit'?
> P. Yeah, well I don't think I've repressed it, I think I've dealt with it, you know. and the other thing that's happened is, the office, the entire office, it's shut down completely, it's no longer sitting there. It's no longer something that I see, or I hear about, the other two staff are gone too now. They shut the whole operation down, they liquidated all the assets.
> R. So, physically and symbolically, that no longer exists?
> P. Yeah, and that was part of [his recovery from depression], 'cause that happened on the 31st of December, and it's really only been the last few weeks I've been feeling really good, so ... that was part of it. It's more the fact that it existed still. The whole fact it no longer exists, it's just good for me.

Obviously, there is an extreme personal significance attached to identification with the specific workplace, even after over a year of unemployment.

[3] Survivors Also Experience Dislocation from Familiar Workplace Structures

People are no longer able to either rely on the workplace for a sense of family, or a related sense of personal identity. The 'survivors,' still working after the cutbacks, are not viewing the job as secure anymore, and the insecurity negatively affects the workplace environment, as this subdivision assistant notes.

> P. I think it's kind of back and forth and it seems like one day you think this is secure and then the next day someone will say something negative about it and then you're not sure. So you're never really sure. And it seems that if somebody says something negative about it, it seems like it goes through the whole group, and pretty soon they're all negative. And it's never certain, since we have contracts for this year, but we never know how many [municipalities] will sign on for the next year.

The following survivor expresses anger towards the provincial administration and the way that they handled the layoffs. It was a very intense and traumatic experience for him, since he was on the management team, and still affects his work. As the familiar workplace family and occupational structures are drastically altered, the survivors also experience dislocation, while remaining in positions. The characteristics of the positions themselves, and the workplace environment, are now changed so much as to seem unfamiliar.

> R. It's interesting that you direct your anger towards the government. One other person who did that commented that it's a problem, since you can't actually 'hit them.'
> P. I think it's affecting my work. I'm not as happy, you try to get some external validation, but I'm not as happy. I had to sit down and really make some big decisions this year, about alternatives to staying in this job. And those were never options I'd ever considered before this happened.

This person notes that she no longer had any potential for promotion in the restructured workplace. This is very similar to the other survivor quoted above, who felt that his job now had no developmental potential regarding doing what he had been trained for, due to the loss of so many contributory staff. When these kinds of potentials associated with the dynamic workplace are not realizable, the workplace becomes a 'static' environment, and is no longer valued as a context for objectifying process. These 'survivors' are dislocated from the recognized objectification in the workplace, much as the unemployed are.

> R. Did this first shift involve just a title change on your part, or an actual demotion - I mean did you lose pay?
> P. I, I didn't lose pay...um... there were other things happening at the same time...when, when it happened... I was given an option because it was considered... that I could construe it as constructive dismissal,... that I was... given an option of a severance package and termination, or accepting this... other job..... uh....and I didn't accept that, because I need to work. Um, but it, and I was told that if I accepted it, I was in effect red-circled. That they considered me to be overpaid, uh... they considered my former salary to be high for the new...position, and that I wouldn't get any increases until everyone else caught up. But at the same time there was a...reclassification of all administrative officials going on.... and.... when I wasn't told that I was red-circled, but I was told that it was quite likely that I would be red-circled and they'd wait 'till they got the results of this total re-evaluation and decided. When... that evaluation was done... I was in effect red-circled, I was told that my salary was higher than what I deserved, and.... I appealed that, because there was an appeal mechanism with this thing and a number of people appealed. I won my appeal, and, basically my salary stayed, and actually went up very slightly from... what it had been. So, the re-evaluation concluded that my position was worth what my old position had been - it had been an outdated salary system anyway, so maybe the old position had been worth more, but the new position was worth what the old position had been pegged at in terms of salary. So my salary was, uh, not affected. But I had to go through all the hassles of... appeal, and of defending an appeal, and the whole process.

My participants, both working and unemployed, expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction and indignation towards the manner in which the cutbacks were implemented. All of them 'knew' that the procedural process had been 'wrong,' in various ways. To the survivors, this meant that they were now working in an environment that was no longer following the natural occupational or workplace parameters. It was now an arbitrary and increasingly abstract context, in which specific structural predictability and intelligibility no longer existed. In this way, the survivors were dislocated from highly personalized workplace structure, again, in very similar ways as were the unemployed.

The following person shows the shock at the effects to the occupational and workplace structure that resulted from the Klein administration cutbacks. She was completely taken by surprise by the unexpected extent of the cuts, and had to deal with an almost impossible situation very quickly.

> P. Ralph Klein's election meant that we knew there was going to be downsizing. In all honesty, I anticipated that we might be cut by 5% or 10%, and this would be an easy transition, to get us down to a level that everybody else was accepting. A little streamlining, a little cut here and there, which I will admit, we could have stood. I could have said, we could handle 15%, even 20%. Unfortunately, it was when Steve West became the minister [of municipal affairs] he took it upon himself to ... he had this preconceived notion about planners. There were rumblings, in early '93 about the cuts that we were going to have to take, and we've always had a bit of a tussle with the Alberta planning board in terms of funding. Regional planning commissions over the years - the microscope have always been on them at the provincial level. About what we were doing, what our usefulness was. I don't know what they thought, that maybe we have too much power, too much authority, or what. We have been under the microscope time and time again. There was a regional systems study that was done, and then the Price-Waterhouse study that said maybe we shouldn't have so much funding. But the big blow was when in October of '93, when the minister Steve West announced that the provincial funding to planning commissions was going to be cut off over 3 years, 100%. In spring of '93, I had met with the assistant deputy minister he gave me an inkling of what was coming down the pipe but not, you know, the full-blown details. In October of '93, I was at a community planing conference, and then *I was told that provincial funding for regional planning commissions was going to be cut 100%. So then the axe had fallen. You don't internalize it, at the time, I didn't. It's a shock that hits you later.* And then what happened to me, is that I knew, what the end line was going to be. And I knew what had to be done then, if the commission was going to continue to even exist. [the provincial funding was 63% of their operating budget, the rest coming from municipalities. However, the municipalities expected certain services for their contribution, services that had to be somehow still functional yet reduced by 63%.] And the municipalities were also subject to budget reductions as well, so then *the question became, "will planning even be able to continue at all?" So security of everyone in this workplace, that was gone, that was gone. I can't tell you when I internalized the fact that, that the commission wasn't going to do anything like what it used to do. You know that you have to take your staff down from 20-odd people, to what you can afford*, if they even decide to stay on board. [This individual and several other people mentioned that the effective dismantling of the ten regional planning commissions in Alberta only represented a provincial financial savings of 5 million dollars/year.]

This follows Foucault's idea of what would amount to dislocation from a highly 'naturalized' position, along with Bourdieu's concept of the extreme developed familiarity associated with collective habitus. The integration of the individual 'self' with occupation and workplace should by now not seem unusual, since I have presented arguments about the importance of developmental processes, specific occupational logic, and distinct workplace interaction, all contributing to an uniquely personalized structural workplace positions.

The survivors of the layoffs, now in such small numbers, acknowledge that the formerly personalized, well understood meanings of titles, ranks and associated statuses within the workplace have been made practically irrelevant. This person notes that now titles and positions are no longer associated with any specific work, since everyone left has to do as much as they can, regardless if the work would have been formerly a part of their job description. Field-related norms have been broken down along with the sense of family.

> P. Now, even [the director] is taking on that kind of planning work.
> R. So titles have sort of changed in meaning now?
> P. Yeah, it more denotes.. when you're talking finances or something like that you talk to the director, when you're talking bylaws, or subdivisions or stuff like that you talk to [the two remaining planners].

The executive director quoted next, also shows that with such extensive cuts, even though she is not unemployed, she experiences a sense of dislocated liminality. This included, for her, the trauma and self-blame of having to let people go, the almost complete dismantling of her field and workplace, and a complete restructuring and *disempowerment* of her occupational position. She indicates a high level of introspection and self-blame, very much like many of the unemployed persons do.

> P. It's 100% cut - you're *left to drift on your own*, you're left with no provincial commitment to land-use planning, it's become entirely a choice for the member municipalities whether they will continue to seek our advice. ... And we'll never replace the knowledge that we've built up. ... So where do you start? Where do

> you start? You know you're going to have to lay off people, stay ahead of the money. And when you know it's going to have to be good people you have to let go, it's agonizing. On a personal level anxiety, stress, it tore me apart, - anxiety attacks, chronic stress, it tears you apart. You can tell them the facts, you can try to keep them informed, but you can't help them emotionally. You tell them it's a mess, it's horrible, and this is something I have to do because it's something over which *I have no control*. And they know it deep down, but - naturally enough, who are they going to lash out at? I'm the one who has to go and tell them face-to-face. Hmmm, can I resolve those things, well I beat myself up, and there were nights that sleep didn't come, and I tried to tell myself that it wasn't my fault, but you think "how could I have handled this better?"

Survivors as individual agents are relegated to an ambiguous position, without realization of dynamic agency in the context of field-related norms. They are also hurt and confused by the rapid breakup of the social interaction of the workplace family. The following survivors clearly show that when these layoffs occurred so quickly, and everyone was wondering who would be the next to go, the sense of 'family' or collective habitus *could not be sustained*, as individual interests came to the fore, and familiar personalities changed. Survivors were also dislocated from the social interactive meanings as this familial atmosphere disallowed.

> P. And everybody - it seems like when things get really hard, it seems that people try to look out after themselves, but they don't think as much about anybody else's feelings, they just try to look out for themselves it seems. Some of them became more tense, and some of them that are always calm and cool and collected seemed to become moody and tense. Because it wasn't like them to get angry or to fly off the handle at you, but they did that. They were pretty stressed-out. During all of this they could be really sharp and that, and you knew it wasn't like them.

Personalized, individualistic workplace positions changed in meaning as people were removed, and the atmosphere became one of trepidation, which destroyed the collectivity of the workplace habitus, as this person observes.

> R. Do you still enjoy coming in to work?
> P. Um, well, I do now... yeah, but for a while you know when there were all those

> layoffs, everybody was so down you know, it still seems that when the were being laid off, you were losing friends too, because you don't see all of them the same way, you know, some of them you don't see at all. Especially the ones who have taken lawsuits you know, it makes you feel differently about them somehow, or they feel uncomfortable in talking to you, so you just don't see them again. So we lost friends but then we saw that different side to them too you know.

The next survivor hesitated when asked to describe feelings and office atmosphere during the layoffs, and indicated that it was something he still did not like to think about very much.

> P. You know I haven't spent a lot of time thinking back on that, because some of it hurts. I haven't really, you know I couldn't tell you what I thought, it's been, say two years ago, when they really started to cut. And a lot of those were good people leaving. And I find that just terrible. And you lose the *diversity of characters*. Certain people; it really hurt. and they were very specific periods, and they came in clusters, and I knew a couple of months when these times were coming. And those were terrible periods of time. We would sit down, as a management team, and say "look, if this is what the money is going to be, what kind of organization can we have?" And look through the list, and if you had one two many planning assistants, then there was nothing you could do. And during the last days, I thought we didn't do enough of that, so part of it is I'm angry that I knew too much, and on the other hand I'm upset that I didn't know enough, so there's no middle ground probably.

The following person describes the feeling of being dislocated from the motivational aspects of creativity formerly realized in the workplace. This lack of motivation is also similar to that expressed by many of the unemployed individuals.

> P. It takes away a lot of your drive I think to keep that, like I had been challenged before on the job that I really enjoyed doing. You need to be challenged I think, to be able to set goals for yourself. At that time, I didn't know the extent of the budget cuts, the position we were in.

The following survivor remarks on a similar inability to continue being creative in his work, since the support staff have been reduced so drastically. He ends up doing a lot of the jobs that support staff would have done, and the work he used to do is no longer being done. Without this developmental potential, he no longer finds accomplishment in his position, as the unemployed often feel a distinct lack of 'purpose.'

> P. I don't feel accomplishment, since [about a year]. You know 'cause all I'm doing is chasing my own thoughts. I've got ten piles of messages I've got to return. I've got files, and I've got to copy this for someone. and those aren't accomplishments. I'm not doing investigations of subdivisions, and bylaws that need to be changed and developed. And that's going to run out, because we're not developing new things here, and if we're not developing information, then it's going to become obsolete. This kind of activity is only going to keep on so long. So I'm not feeling very happy, not feeling very stable, and there's the kind of insecurity that "did I make the right decisions," and so I've internalized a lot of those things, and I try to keep it away from my family. It's not the same job, and I don't feel I'm being treated well, by the government.

Survivors who are left in an ambiguous position, are further constrained in that they are not even able to look for more secure work elsewhere, as this individual notes.

> P. Here too, nobody wants to look for other work, because if you found something, and left your job before you were laid off, then you wouldn't get that severance package that you rely on. If they said "we needed that position, and weren't going to lay you off," you wouldn't get that severance package, even if you needed that. And it seems that severance package has become... a 'bad' thing, but you want to save. Sometimes I feel that I'd be willing to give that up if someone would just say "you've got a secure position."

The next individual notes that the contextualized rationalizations of job loss among the unemployed people, which were designed to be positive towards their own situation, could affect the contextualization of the survivors' positions in a negative way. There is still a dialectical relationship between survivors and the laid-off.

> P. The last time they had their round of layoffs, I felt just awful - for the last couple of weeks, just horrible - physically, drained and exhausted. And I went to see my doctor, and I told her what was going on, and she said," well maybe you're feeling guilty 'cause so many have left and you're still working" - I'd never thought of that before. And she also pointed out to me "well isn't it nice that so many have been laid off and you're still there, that they value you enough to keep you there?" And I'd never heard that before, and all they were thinking of was the people who had been laid off, and [one of them] had said to us "none of them felt singled out,

> since at this point it could have been anyone of us, and it had nothing to do with our abilities or performances or anything." And I felt so much better after seeing my doctor, because she said "there must have been something about your abilities and work that caused you to be kept on..." and all I'd ever heard was "it could have been anyone."

Within the 'microcosmic' workplace environment, dominant societal ideological values are maintained through having a position as a worker as opposed to a non-worker. At the same time, workplace agents are somewhat distanced from the broader societal structures by a much stronger identification with the more personally-felt, much more highly intelligible 'deeper' meanings of workplace structure and position. In a situation of rapid workplace downsizing, all of the 'deeper' structured meanings and values, are in transition as well, or lost. In these ways, the survivors illustrate the liminal feelings of the unemployed in a very complementary way, by expressing experiences of dislocation while remaining in the workplace. This illustrates very clearly the intense meanings of *specific workplace structures*, which people feel dislocated from when they are physically removed from them, but as well when only some of the people remain and structured interaction and structural meanings are altered. The comments of survivors contribute to an understanding of the structural dislocation and liminal experiences of the unemployed, as being at least as much related to specific workplace context as to the broader societal context.

Since the destruction of these main elements of the collective workplace habitus, the remaining survivors of the cutbacks appear to view their work as bereft of its developmental qualities, thus less objectively valued, even while they are working harder than ever. The unemployed also may be objectively active, while perceiving themselves as inactive. Activity, whether outside of the workplace, or within the workplace where structure has been rendered almost meaningless, is often not seen as having these positive characteristics.

[4] 'Objectively' Active, 'Subjectively' Static Activity and Liminality

In her extensive study, Newman observed that while some unemployed individuals were what she calls, "objectively" quite active, they often did not see themselves that way, and perceived themselves as being "static" in what she calls a "subjective" sense. Newman concludes that both of these seemingly paradoxical observations can be reconciled by her "symbolic approach." As she says, the perceptions are based on individual perceptions on what is meaningful activity, related to activities while working.

> In purely physical terms, the unemployed are not motionless, but in terms of symbolism and meaning (both for themselves and for observers who reflect cultural attitudes) they are idle because their activities lack socially recognized meaning. The unemployed themselves devalue their activities and see them as goal-less in comparison to workplace behaviour, and hence take little pleasure from them. Experientially, they are doing little or nothing; objectively they are involved in many activities.
>
> (Newman 1989:265)

Newman's point can help explain both the tendency of the middle-class unemployed individual to view their situations and express them as devoid of structure in a negative sense, even when not expressing former workplace structure as a central value. There is a high degree of individualism in the objective framing of what in fact constitutes positive activity. Since almost all activity or practice is structured, it is practical experience which affects the individual perception of whether or not their lives are structured in a positive meaningful sense. People are far more flexible than is implied by macroscopic studies showing the relative inflexibility of work-related ideologies at the societal level. Even considering the emphasis here on the importance of the specific workplace, some unemployed individuals are able to construct objectively valuable activities and re-structure in positive ways without paid work.

The following person describes significant restructuring after unemployment, which necessitated moving from the city to the country. While constrained by increasing social isolation, she was simultaneously freed to pursue other activities which became very meaningful over time. These activities reduced the shock and depression of her situation through her own reconstructive agency. They *became* increasingly symbolically and pragmatically meaningful, as well as providing structure.

> P. There's a big garden spot out there and I planted a big garden and I tended to that and I canned and I froze and saved food and did all the stuff to get us ready for winter, so, we're basically self- [sufficient]. We raised some chickens - just took up the country life and figured you know, try and cut costs as much as we could.
> R. Do you enjoy that stuff?
> P. I do. Once summer hit you know and I could get out and work out there, it was a lot better - I was in a deep depression, like I was never going to get myself out of it you know, oh, it was terrible. I did, luckily kind of swing around, but it took... 'cause there was so many things to try to adjust to so fast eh. At first it's "here I am, I'm stuck in this place, don't know a soul, anywhere," my husband had a shop in town and he would get up and go into town, so about 8:30 in the morning I would sit here by myself and think - I had all this stuff, I had lots to do, I had unpacking and cleaning and whatever, but I just couldn't do anything. And all my kids were in school, so I'd sit here and just go, you know, I was just drugged-out, and I had no energy, oh it took me a while. But that was all part, I'm sure, of trying to get used to the idea of trying to do without, eh, and to make yourself, to discipline yourself to living with less. We lived with little anyway, so, we live with less now.

Upon unemployment and considerable reorganizing, this person found volunteer work and other activities which to her were even more challenging and thus symbolically meaningful and rewarding than her former activities at work.

> P. I'm teaching in the schools right now, in the public schools, but it's on a volunteer basis - see that's something I absolutely love to do - and I put a lot of work into it and time, but you know, ah, if it would work into a paying job, then I'd be in heaven, 'cause that's what I like to do. So, you know I'm really challenged now, see I'm challenged doing these things I'm doing - which I never was, after a while in my job. I felt I wasn't, so if I could just find that balance, you know where I could get paid for doing what I love to do.

The following person shows the extremely salient aspect of individuality in each case of adjusting to unemployment. This also implies that meaning in the workplace has much more to do with individual agency than any 'given' structured environment. This person was a well-educated professional with 15 years on the job, and was highly aware of being both 'experientially and objectively' very active upon unemployment. Still, for her it was what most people would call the 'mundane,' everyday activity structuring that she recalls having to consciously adjust to. She was intellectually and psychologically well-prepared to deal with the trauma, and had a good church-group support network. Although traumatized, she quickly started meaningful activities which she could not have done while working.

> P. Not so much the habit of [routine], but more the sense that I hadn't accomplished anything during the day. Time just sort of dribbled away, and there wasn't a sense that "I'm going to get up a this time and have such and such done by this time..." it was considerably looser than that, and so it felt like I hadn't really done very much. Whether it's doing laundry or housework or stuff, all of that structure was gone, since I had done those things during the weekends before, now I could do them during the week. There was an AutoCAD computer drafting course offered at the college and it was during the day, so now I could do that, and that was something I had had in mind before I was laid off. And it's a real treat being able to go shopping during the day when I'm not tired. I enjoyed having that time off and the flexibility of it, and I think I enjoy it ... more than I don't, although I still feel guilty sometimes, not having as much done each day. It's a sense of .. it almost feels like I'm 'visiting,' like I'm not 'fully here,' not really rooted, it's like I'm here now, but I could be anywhere in 6 months, so it's definitely a transition. I have a very strong sense that the Lord 's got something in mind for me, and I'm not alone, so it's not such a traumatic transition.

On the other hand, the following person worked for a time in various capacities in his wife's private business, where his contributions were quite significant and likely highly-appreciated. However, to him they were not activities which he considered as 'real work,' partly since they did not revolve around a standard workday schedule. He still felt that he had to 'pretend' to be working, even though he really was working, in an objective sense.

> P. For a year or so, just basically doing my wife's books and you know she had equipment to fix - just kind of stuff that would only keep me busy half-time and it drove me nuts - I still had that lower opinion of myself - still had that problem with going into stores. During the daytime, 9-12 and 1-5, - difficulty {laughs sadly} that took a while to get over that, until I gradually realized there are other people out there who work evenings and things and...

The following person shows that dislocation from the workplace and field in her perception was literally the loss of a "life." This did not mean the complete lack of structure, since she still retained a positive place in societal structure, but it was not as symbolically-meaningful or developmentally-dynamic as specific workplace processes. This was the case, even though she was able to construct a valued 'new life' upon becoming unemployed. As soon as she could, however, this individual became re-employed in another demanding position.

> P. It was traumatic, but on the other hand, I lived better.... um... I got enough sleep, for the first time in 15 years. Because I was getting by on 6 hrs or less a night. And I need more than that. I was getting - I used to work out religiously every noon hour - it was constrained by, it was an hour. When I went for a workout when I was unemployed, if I wanted to swim a mile, instead of half a mile, and if I felt like it that day I would. If I wanted to go for a bike ride in the morning, which I often did, it wasn't a half-hour bike ride I could ride for an hour and a half. I love to read, and [when working] all I had time to read was journals, and professional magazines. I could read the Globe and Mail - and read it as a good newspaper instead of just reading the local paper for the headlines to find out sort of what's going on in the world in their distorted view of it. Because I'd never had time to spend an hour and a half reading the Globe and Mail. And... life was

> more relaxed at home because I could get... the things.... the few things that need to be done to maintain a household for 2 people done during the day before my husband came home. So that when he came home we'd have a leisurely dinner together, I wasn't running around doing laundry, I didn't have to go grocery shopping, after 6 p.m., on my way home. I had time to do things. *I had a life*. And I had known before that *the life that I had was not healthy*, so the only good thing was the fact that, that I was able to.... *that life ended*.... and I was able to live better. *So I put structure back into my life. Because I was scared that I would just drift*. And that it would become a habit to do nothing. I could sleep 'till noon if, without really trying, and I didn't want to be in the habit of sleeping 'till noon. I made an effort to...not get up with [her spouse], but get up when he left, and at least be... mobile before he left, so that I was up... by 8. My day would be different every day - I didn't do exactly the same things at the same time, but I, I usually had some kind of job for myself that I knew I was going to do that day, whether it was something in the yard, whether there was something that I could work on my resume and send in an application for. I was still involved in a number of organizations, so I took on more duties with them , so they had things that needed to be done there. Everyday I tried to do something that made me feel useful and productive. I tried to learn to relax. And I tried to make sure that everyday I also did something I enjoyed just for the sake of relaxing and being in the sunshine in the winter or going for a really long bike ride in the summer. And spending some time with friends, although that's harder 'cause they all... work so you had to do that in the evening. But I tried to still make sure my day was full, and I didn't feel like I'd wasted... the time. But I also tried to make it better. Than the life I had been living.
>
> [*emphasis mine*]

[5] Chapter Summary

One main theme of this study has been to examine reasons that people find so much meaningfulness within the specific context of the work that they do. Many of these reasons may have to do with a dominant ideological position that emphasizes the value of work. However, individual variation and contextual reconstructive agency shows that broad ideological explanations may not be the most important in understanding the value of work and the commonly expressed feelings of lack of structure during unemployment. Recognizing the inherent individualistic agency in creating objective meanings is thus central in interpreting how people perceive their situations[15]. Whether or not a person feels that their lives are meaningfully structured, in the workplace, or upon becoming unemployed, has to have a determining effect on whether or not these people are experiencing a liminal or "interstructural" state. We cannot construct our own preconceived notions based upon dominant societal ideology about what constitutes *meaningful* social structure, or what may be considered as 'unstructured'; we can only draw conclusions based upon the narrations of the people involved. Due to the relevance of personalized agency and meaningfulness produced directly through interactive practice, it becomes an imperative to view the experience of unemployment not only as dislocation from a vague, impersonal societal category of the working, but as a specific kind of individualized dislocation from an integral part of the 'self.' It then becomes a much more understandable process of dislocation, since it involves the removal of personalized agency, and dislocation from the locus, not only of 'work,' but of the ability to objectify and authenticate the self through interactive practice.

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[15] Studies in recent years have begun focussing on the micro-contextual meaningfulness of the workplace and especially changes in the workplace. Ritzer (1987:256) says "There have been a number of dramatic changes in organizations and those changes are likely to continue for years to come. Among the most notable changes is the downsizing of many organizations." de Vries and Balazs (1997:13) state "Dictated by tough economic principles, following the call of the stock market, downsizing was seen as solely positive in its early days. It was unclear then to what extent its effects would later change the rules of the corporate world. ...Nobody was willing or able to anticipate the detrimental consequences this new practice had from a social point of view. In contrast to the blue-collar workers who were used to, and even anticipated, an unpredictable and fluctuating job situation, white-collar workers were taken by surprise by the sudden and complete disappearance of any kind of job security. The up- until-then protected middle class had to start living with the shattered illusion of prosperity; they could no longer take it for granted that their children would automatically have a better life than they did; they had to cope with the unprecedented and tragic downward mobility they were ill prepared for."

CONCLUSION:

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF UNEMPLOYMENT: MORE THAN INVOLUNTARY PLACEMENT INTO AN ABSTRACT SOCIETAL CATEGORY - DISLOCATION FROM THE SOCIAL 'SELF'

[1] Gender: A Main Factor in Effects of Dislocation from Specific Workplace Structure

There is a great deal of diversity evident among working middle-class professionals as to how much of their daily lives were structured by their occupations, and how much were structured by ancillary interests and activities. Well-developed, highly meaningful occupational positions and workplace practice was evident among all of my participants, and the intensely personalized nature of these positions, interactions and the workplace context directly relate to their high levels of trauma upon becoming unemployed. The women who participated in this study generally had much more well-developed extra-workplace interests, activities and related social networks than did the men. This meant that the women generally were much more able to "find productive alternatives to work" as Burman put it (1988:139-140). More accurately, the women already had developed productive extra-workplace practice which was highly integrated with their selves, so that upon becoming unemployed, they had other activities to 'fall back upon,' ones that reinforced their sense of self-worth and social productivity, again, in a very personalized and meaningful sense.

This observation must be taken into careful consideration in terms of implications.

Firstly, these women essentially had ancillary interests already developed due to the fact that they were generally the primary caregivers and household workers while they held a position in the formal workplace. In some cases, women without children had developed these interests through extensive participation in church-based activities while working. Women were also the only participants who often expressed the carefully-considered opinion that it was not 'healthy' to divest all of one's positive self-worth only in a workplace role and practice. This was often seen in terms analogous to the well-worn expression of the dangers of 'placing all your eggs in one basket.' This is very significant, since these women, unlike most of the men, had already 'stepped back,' and consciously recognized the worth and usefulness, in commonsense terms, of having a broad range of interests and activities; all of which could contribute to feelings of self-worth, objectified through social interaction with others practising similar activities.

In terms of Burman's observations that being able to find productive alternatives to work, these women had already done so, and this ability, although it did not seem to directly ameliorate the trauma of dislocation from the workplace 'family,' did help ease the trauma of unemployment, since in a very real sense, these women did not become 'unemployed,' when they were still engaged in productive, socially-recognized necessary work in the household sphere. What this implies is quite striking, in that men did not feel that work in the household sphere was 'real' work for men, although they did recognize that is was 'real work' for women. Due to the influences of a still highly patriarchal gendered ideology about work, males were left out of the ability to develop a broad range of steady employment, with all associated implications for positive self-authentication. In a very real sense, we see here a very important way that males, through acceptance of dominant ideology, are severely limited and disadvantaged upon unemployment, due to patriarchal role-delineations that also have a negative effect on women. Such rigid gendered role-expectations means that women still do the vast majority of child-care and household duties, while working outside of the home. In times of occupational insecurity, this ends up being an advantage and a disadvantage simultaneously.

The lesson that should be taken from this is not the patriarchal assumption that women do not suffer as much from unemployment as men do. Rather, the conclusion I would promote here is that men, through participating much more with duties in the household sphere, would not have to have all of their positive self-worth invested in their one workplace role, would contribute to a higher level of equality in work in the informal sphere, and could share in the benefits of a broader range of self-verifying roles.

In relation to both ancillary interests and the ability to find alternative structure and processes, the factor of gender appears to be very important, as shown in chapter six. Women are generally in the lower-paid, lower status positions, and occupy most of the part-time positions. This is especially the case with women who are involved in child raising. On one hand this supports the main body of feminist literature that sees this as a result of a patriarchal system which includes both the lower workplace positioning of women, along with their continuing to do the majority of household work and child raising. On the other hand, these women expressed part-time work and flexibility as main values, since they also regarded child raising as a very important societal position, and the expressed values of women cannot only be seen as the result of patriarchal socialization.

[1a] Gendered Liminality

This did not mean that the loss of workplace position was any less traumatic than that of males or women without children. However, it did mean that these women did not seem to experience as intense feelings of liminality, as it was not only their workplace structuring that contributed to their 'anchorage,' or positioning in society. At the same time, these women's workplace positions were valued for very specific reasons, usually having to do with another role, aside from child raising, which revolved around adult interaction, and recognition of occupational skills.

[2] Dislocation from a Specific Symbolically-Charged Workplace

What becomes very clear in these and my study, is the great deal of social and structural impact that the *specific* workplace has had on these people, much more directly and personally felt than societal work-related ideologies. It is obvious that the workplace itself is a setting for a distinctively structured social interaction, and the objectified practice that Newman (1989:185) spoke of. The main reasons that the specific occupationally-based workplace is so highly identified with and personalized, are discussed in chapters four and five. The workplace provides a very unique context, in which occupational knowledge gained through specialized post-secondary educational processes, can be objectified through practice in the field-specific workplace. In the field-specific professional workplace, the developmental process stemming from individual interests, and refined through specialized post-secondary education, is objectively realized as able to be a continuing process, through the dynamic agency of workplace position.

In this microcosmic context, individuals with similarly developed personal interests are able to constantly reinforce each other's values, through feedback which would be meaningless without intense mutual understanding of occupational and social parameters. These contextual dynamics contribute to a specific dynamism in the workplace, where the occupational field itself is constantly being objectively further understood. The specific field and workplace are both personalized and symbolically-charged, through the collective reproduction and advancement of the occupation itself, in *practice and agency*. This is what allows for this specific context to become a highly meaningful collective habitus, made intensely socially and occupationally intelligible through ongoing practice.

[2a] Class Habitus Differences and the Workplace Microcosm

Although certainly my participants represented a wide variety of what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as different class habituses, for the purposes of this study, the extremely high level of workplace interaction, even integration, should be seen as contributing to microcosmic qualities of this specific workplace. For the period of this daily interaction, these people are to a large extent, 'removed' from the status and role-set structures of the society around them. This is indeed somewhat of an artificial or partial 'removal,' since at the end of the workday, everyone goes home to very different class-based worlds.

In my inclusion of all of these individuals in the same workplace collective habitus, I have indeed stretched the concept of habitus and applied it in a very broad sense. In this case, I have done so because all of the members of this workplace *felt* as if they belonged to the same collective, field-related habitus. Still, I have presented much evidence, in the narrations of the participants, that indicates not only a gendered collective habitus, but one which is class-differentiated as well. These differences are only muted, or downplayed in the intense collective practice, so that each person perceives themselves, and is perceived by others, as 'belonging' to the same field-related collectivity, as integral members, not as 'replaceable parts. In this orchestrated workplace, the senior planners could not function without the specialized support staff, and they are very aware of this fact. although a hierarchy exists, it is an orchestrated hierarchy, which contributes to the personalization of each position, and to the intense social familiarity. That this hierarchy of structural positions is very different from that of the society surrounding this 'microcosm' is precisely why I choose to include all members in the same collective habitus.

As a final point here, I think that the analogy of Turner's (1967, 1969) concept of 'communitas' as uniting initiates in a temporary rite of passage is very appropriate. As anthropologists, it is often easier for us to think of small-scale societies as 'egalitarian;' if this were the case, then all of the tribal initiates would indeed enter the rite of passage as equals in status, and communitas would occur naturally. However, Turner's main point regarding communitas, is that for the temporary period of the rite of passage, the status distinctions and role-sets are suspended, indicating that they existed and were very meaningful in the mainstream tribal society. Similarly, here, while acknowledging that a variety of class habituses remain salient among my participants, these distinctions could be, and indeed appeared to be, if not suspended, then greatly downplayed and muted within the workplace, for the purposes of orchestrated harmony directed towards a common field-related goal. Perhaps one more analogy would be appropriate here.

Symphonies, as collectivities, are strictly hierarchized, yet not necessarily in exactly the same way as the status of members outside of this context, since, as so highly field-specific, the majority of mainstream society does not recognize these positions, and may well assume that any member of a given symphony has a certain status, simply by belonging. Further, although among members of a symphony, different statuses are recognized, it is very likely that during a collective performance, the collectivity takes on so much precedence, with everyone contributing in an essential manner, that these status distinctions may be temporarily suspended, are at least muted and downplayed. As with my participants then, the intensity of practice and common goals during production, could well justify my including every member as part of the same collective workplace habitus.

[3] The Workplace as Ritual Occasion

This collective intelligibility and personalization contributes to the workplace becoming a highly ritualized occasion , in which social and occupational qualities of the self become integrated, through developmental meaning-creation in the specific workplace. These aspects, which represent the bringing together of individuals with similar interests, and similar training and knowledge in a highly social environment, contribute to highly personalized individual as well as collective roles. In this particular workplace, the collective social interactional and occupational practice took on such highly personalised symbolic meanings, that the members thought of themselves, not as a temporary 'community,' but in the more personal sense of a workplace 'family.' These processes and interpretations are shown in chapters four and five, and in relation to liminality, in chapter ten. As the workplace has to be structured in order for each role to take on specific meaning, individual positioning within the specific workplace structure is shown to be intrinsically and developmentally meaningful, in chapters four and five, and in relation to liminal experiences, in chapter ten.

Negative effects (including liminality) related to a feeling of a lack of structure upon unemployment are directly related to the degree to which the workplace was the central and meaningful 'time-structuring' context for the individual person. My participants expressed a general impression that the most significant dislocation they have experienced is from the highly specific workplace and occupational setting, along with the ambiguities of a societal 'non-position.' This emphasis on the highly personalized specific workplace position is complemented by the concentration by my participants, on the specific socio-economic contextual situation in Alberta under the Klein administration. This contextual level was more salient to them than the more macroscopic context of general negative effects to the western middle-class, which these people were also well aware of. The cutbacks of the Klein administration, which directly affected their specific occupational areas, and their workplace structure, was felt much more personally, and expressed as a personal 'attack' by many people. This personal occupational context is outlined in chapter one.

[4] Unemployment, Self-Perceptions and Societal Categories

The effects of dislocation from morally-charged dichotomous societal categories of the working as opposed to the non-working have significant influences upon experiences of dislocation from societal positioning, as shown in chapters seven, eight and nine. It appears that especially feelings of stigma and marginalization are highly related to dislocation from the morally 'proper' category of the worker, representing dominant ideology about societal productivity and purpose. However, most of my participants, both working and unemployed, consistently expressed a personal belief in the 'work ethic,' only with qualifications, and these middle-class professionals did not think that 'any work' was better than no work. This is discussed in chapter seven, and further indicates that there are many crucial characteristics of the specific occupation and workplace which make work valuable, and valued work structure is not found arbitrarily; but must relate to *personal* values, not only to those of socialized or internalized dominant ideology. I must conclude then, that much of the feeling of stigma, and especially that of marginalization, also related to an individual perception of being marginalized in relation to being removed from the specific workplace position. Stigmatic feelings seemed to be more highly related to dominant ideological values related to work, then did the feelings of being marginalized, which reflected societal ideological influences, but was more directly felt as losing 'membership' in the highly personal specific workplace 'family.'

Feelings of stigma or marginalization are also strongly associated with the morally-charged ethic of consumerism, as possession and display of products becomes increasingly identified with qualities of the self, as discussed in chapters seven and eight. In chapter nine, I showed that increasing financial pressures on the middle-class can have differing impacts related to dominant ideologies. These may range from a conservative maintenance of the conceptual morality associated with the bounded working and unemployed categories, to these boundaries becoming less rigid. Both of these extremes have an effect on how individuals perceive their situations. The general pattern seems to be an increasingly discouraged middle-class with significantly lowered lifestyle and career expectations, also discussed in chapter nine. However, it is not at all conclusive that greatly increased middle-class unemployment will tend to make the experience any less traumatic, or significantly decrease the stigma of unemployment. This is largely the case due to the increased nuclear family isolation, and lessened neighbourhood interaction, which is shown to be a common pattern. What this means is that the social interaction within the workplace takes on added significance, as neighbourhood interaction seems to be decreasing. These factors are expected to maintain the stigma, marginality and liminal experiences of unemployment, and increase the significance of the specific workplace position.

[5] Experiences of Unemployment: Both Societal and Workplace Levels

It is apparent that factors influencing the experiences of unemployment, such as marginality and stigma and liminality, have to be seen on one level in relation to dominant work-related ideologies. However, in many respects, dominant ideological values and categorizations are experienced somewhat indirectly and often in an abstract sense. At another level, specific workplace dynamics also have to be recognized, especially since symbolic meaningfulness of the workplace is much more directly felt by most of the individuals I interviewed. Most of my participants were resourceful enough to reconstruct symbolically-meaningful activities and some form of coping with unemployment, with societal structure. *They could not, however, replicate the symbolic dynamics of their former workplace.*

Any given individual, then, may or may not feel liminality upon unemployment, as dislocation from societal structural position, but it is likely that they will feel liminal in relation to dislocation from the ritually and symbolically rich specific former workplace position. Both of these influences towards feelings of liminality are discussed in chapter ten

[6] The Importance of Integrating Multiple Contextual Levels

This examination of many kinds of influential processes shows that in order to understand experiences of unemployment, we have to recognize the multiple, overlapping symbolic contexts involved. We as researchers cannot artificially isolate unemployed persons as centrally 'belonging' only to a highly abstract, marginally-characterized societal category of the unemployed, if we are to try to understand the deeper levels of meaningfulness among the unemployed. This can only be achieved if the unemployed individuals are understood as dislocated, not only from a positively-construed societal category, but from a specific occupational and workplace niche. these highly specialized niches are much more personalized when extensive narrations of individual unemployed persons, along with their own interpretations are allowed for.

When the dynamic processes within the specific workplace are looked at in these terms, it complements the richness of personalized, dynamic and symbolic meaningfulness that participants expressed. It also contributes to an awareness that the dynamics involving *occupational* orchestration of agents in collective practice in the specific workplace, also coincides with a collective *social harmonization*. Intense social collective interaction cannot be artificially isolated from collective occupational practice. This collective and combined occupational and social practice of the 'self,' narrated as workplace experience contributes to an intense collective awareness and intelligibility. When these aspects are looked at through the narrated interpretations of the meaningfulness found within the context of the specific workplace, then what dislocation from these processes actually means to individuals can be seen in a much richer sense.

This conceptualized presentation should then both contribute to existing research, and expand upon it to some degree. It is suggested here that there is a central flaw in studies of the unemployed when they centrally mirror societal categorizations dichotomizing the working and jobless. It is insufficient to treat the meaning of unemployment as an experience somehow divorced form the rich meaningfulness of previous experiences of specific occupational positions.

Individuals do not think of themselves only in relation to their 'membership' in broad dualistic societal categorisations. These do have an influence, especially upon entrance to the stigmatic category of the unemployed. However, individual self-perceptions are far more related to specific microcosmic contexts and situations. Structured positions at this level, rather than societal structures based on categorizations, are positions from which dislocation can be more comprehensively understood as highly meaningful to the unemployed. Following this conclusion, it follows that dislocation from specific microscopic workplace structure and personalized meaning, is also what makes the experience of liminality salient to the unemployed individual.

This is particularly demonstrated in chapter ten, where I show that the surviving members of this workplace express feeling of liminality, dislocation, and structural ambiguity which we would commonly associate only with the unemployed, and usually in relation to societal values and structure. It is obvious when including the expressed feelings of survivors along with those of the unemployed, that both groups feel dislocation and significant trauma. In each case these feelings refer to the altering and destruction of specific workplace personalized structuring and positioning.

Dominant societal ideologies and values certainly play a significant part in framing individual aspirations. At the same time, at the level of personal experiences, individuals see themselves as responsible for choosing their specific developmental lifestyle pathways, which in this case are directed towards objectification of self-interests in a dynamic workplace setting. It is apparent that the individual cannot usually objectively realize direct agency in relation to the nature of dominant constructs. These dominant constructs can be relegated as abstract (yet still influential) to the individual, who goes about constructing their own meanings at a more salient personalized level. At the same time, societal changes can 'invade' localized or situational contexts, and dislocate individual agents from these personalized settings. When this occurs, it is the destruction of the positional structures within the workplace microcosm that causes the most personal distress, indicating that it is dislocation from this formerly 'secure' microcosm that is the most directly experienced dislocation.

Most studies of the experience of unemployment adopt one of two main contextual perspectives; they either concentrate on the meanings and values evidenced in the dynamics of the specific workplace, or they stress the meaningful influences of the larger-level societal dichotomy between the categories of worker and non-worker. In this study, it becomes apparent that it is essential to integrate both contextual levels in order to attempt a richer understanding of the experience of the unemployed person.

[7] Why Study Situations of Personal Trauma?

In this study, and other studies of the personal effects of such things as unemployment, grieving and so forth, the intention is to emphasize the intense meaningfulness of these situations, so that these meanings cannot be downplayed. When unemployment and its effects are conceptualized only, or even primarily, as a movement between two dichotomous social categories, of the employed and unemployed, with associated general characteristics, the personalized meanings are often lost in the 'macroscopic lens.' In this study, the social phenomenon of a highly situationalized experience of trauma, was examined with the intent to 'bring the people' directly to the forefront, by letting them express themselves in as complete a way as possible. Often in ethnographic presentations, the reader is left wondering, 'where are the people, the individuals?' In the past, feminists have pointed out very clearly that through reading a 'standard' ethnography, one would be left with the impression that women were either non-existent, or so unimportant as to not merit inclusion.

In this study, the position is taken that too many accounts of the unemployed concentrate of a central macroscopic, 'black and white' completely opposite social categories, and when this is the only theoretical framing, one is often left wondering where the personal meanings are. The main point then, in studies of traumatic and situational events in the way presented here, is to personalize these events, and show all the meanings which are located in the 'grey areas.' This kind of study represents a direct objection to the common emphasis on ideology and macroscopic social categories, when this emphasis contributes to depersonalization. It is hoped that, as all case studies do, this one has contributed to a personalization of the results of radical changes in social policy, so that the people affected by the often depersonal policies, are included together, not artificially separated.

[8] Generalizablity of Findings

This study was intended to be highly qualitative, and to use a small research population in order to achieve as much experiential data as possible. Some of the results may be generalizable to other workplaces and situations of unemployment as dislocation. Others centrally contribute to existing research findings, or suggest approaches for further research in this area. The data presented here reinforces most of the existing research on the unemployed. Along with contributions involving stigma and marginality, the more extensive use of the concept of liminality presented here should add to the existing body of experiential research in this area. Liminality is shown here to be much more highly related to specific workplace position than in most studies, which relate it centrally to dislocation from the societal category of the working person.

In approaching what unemployed people express as contextually and meaningfully central, it was necessary to examine the more specific and personalized level of individual and collective practice in the specific workplace, along with the meaningfulness of the specific field. This examination emphasized much smaller face-to face and symbolically meaningful contexts which contributed to framing of individual practice and social interaction on a daily basis. It was found that individuals construct symbolic meaningfulness through occupationally-specific practice, and agency at these specific contextual levels. These highly personalized meanings are what people become dislocated from; they are removed from the objectively constructive agency, which constitutes the deeper meaning of empirical structures and positions. Without recognition of this constructive agency, and the ability of the individual to shape their contextual environments, we disregard these deeper meanings of structures and positions. Then we can only present rather passive, acquiescing individuals, who are traumatized because they no longer 'fit' categories ascribed to them by dominant ideological values. The deeper meanings of social structure and position are constructed at a much more personal, face-to-face level than that of societal ideology. Within these smaller, more homogenous societal segments, structures become 'alive' with symbolic meanings, since they are directly shaped by ongoing interactive agency.

Collective practice is a main contributor to the ritualized, symbolic construction of highly personalized meanings for individuals. The interactive processes between individual agent and various contextual levels and situational experiences is shown here to be centrally salient in experiencing work, and consequently has to be viewed as a main consideration in experiences of unemployment. This study has centrally shown some of the experiences at the individual level, during a period of time when macroscopic socioeconomic changes are taking place. In any anthropological research project, it is these experiences, as they relate to a variety of contextual levels and situational forces, which lend a humanistic approach to what would otherwise be 'depersonalized' contextual change. This study has shown many ways in which contexts are made meaningful through human agency and practice, and how, when this collective practice is 'blocked,' one of the main contexts for activation of the meaningful self, is also removed.

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